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**Governance Mechanisms Shaping Urban Frontages in a Chinese
City: Case Studies in Nanning**

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Abstract

Chinese cities exhibit striking contrasts in the quality and character of their street interfaces—understood here as the public–private edge where buildings meet the street. Urban villages produce visually chaotic but highly functional, "usable" streets; historic districts offer aestheticized facades that often displace street life; planned new towns display high visual order but limited vitality. These recurring patterns expose a gap in the current literature: while much attention has been paid to visual outcomes, insufficient work examines the institutional mechanisms that produce them.

This thesis investigates these mechanisms in Nanning, the capital of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, through three case studies: Wanxiu Village (an urban village), Three Streets and Two Alleys (a historic district), and Wuxiang New District (a planned new town). The research adopts a qualitative multi-case design combining policy document analysis, structured photographic surveys using a standardized three-angle protocol (frontal, oblique, detail), and triangulation across policy, morphology, and everyday use. Fieldwork yielded coded photographs linking physical interface features to their underlying governance instruments. Appendix A documents the full photographic protocol and plate layout; Appendix B presents the complete governance-interface coding book with photograph indices.

The analysis identifies three distinct governance paths, each producing a specific form of interface order: a consultative order based on negotiation between residents, village committees, and district authorities (Wanxiu); an aesthetic order driven by top-down cultural tourism agendas and professional design standards (Three Streets and Two Alleys); and a parametric order shaped by statutory planning instruments and legally binding design guidelines (Wuxiang). The thesis conceptualizes the street interface not as a design product but as an institutional cross-section—a material trace of the transmission chain linking legal intent, governance practice, and everyday urban life. By shifting analytical focus from design outcomes to institutional transmission mechanisms, the study contributes to debates on high modernism—understood here as top-down, expert-led, and standardized spatial ordering aimed at legibility—everyday urbanism, and spatial justice. It proposes context-sensitive design and governance guidelines aimed at transforming "visible order" into "usable order": order valued not only for visual coherence but also for its capacity to support everyday access, occupation, adaptation, and street vitality.

Preface

Nanning is the capital of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, where a complex urban narrative is hidden. The city embodies a unique blend of cultures: the enduring local traditions of the Zhuang people as reflected in the brocade patterns and bronze drum totems which adorn historic districts such as Zhongshan Road and Water Street, are intertwined with profound Southeast Asian influences. The Zhuang, Thai, Lao, Nong, Shan, and other related peoples share deep cultural and linguistic affinities, making the region's origins difficult to disentangle. These cultural phenomena are difficult to distinguish in terms of origin. This region was divided among different political entities that eventually merged. This urban area has been influenced by multiple ethnic cultures, and that Lingnan culture (Cantonese) possesses a distinctiveness that sets it apart from the cultural traditions of other cities. But the streets of Nanning also tell another, more troubling story, one that reflects a crisis that is prevalent in fast-growing China: the erosion of urban fabric and sense of place.

Overpaid pace of urbanization driven by demolition and reconstruction, the physical and cultural coherence of cities has been severed. Nowhere is this rupture more evident than in the public interface of the street. The urban facade, which was once formed naturally by the gradual growth of individual buildings, has succumbed to the pressure of homogenization under the influence of real estate development in pursuit of extreme profits. The result is often a streetscape marked by visual chaos at the level of individual elements, a serious lack of scale, and a broader process of homogenization across redevelopment landscapes. This loss of sensitivity to the city's unique imagery and context is a key challenge for Nanning and countless other Chinese cities.

This study confronts this challenge head-on. It aims to explore the key nodes between the preservation of unique national culture and the promotion of sustainable urban development in Nanning.

There are two core objectives of this study:

1. Analytical contribution: This study propose and empirically test a law–governance–street-interface analytical framework which explains the way of translation from legal and administrative instruments into observable interface outcomes. On this mechanism diagnosis, this study develops a context-specific typological genealogy of street-interface/facade conditions local urban context, using three contrasting institutional settings in Nanning (urban village, heritage district, and planned new district) as comparative evidence.

2. Practical application: To develop implementable design-and-governance guidelines, structured by scenario and delivery chain, that integrate cultural

recognisability and climate adaptation and move renewal from beyond visible order alone toward everyday usability.

This study offers a transferable diagnostic logic and operational pathways for improving street-interface quality in China's local urban contexts by examining Nanning—where Zhuang traditions intersect with wider Southeast Asian influences under redevelopment pressure.

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1 Theoretical Analysis

1.1 Theoretical basis: Urban Interface Definition

In terms of formal urban structure, street facades are understood as key elements that define blocks, street edges and spatial continuity. From the perspective of urban perception, they shape how pedestrians see, move through and remember the city. From a cultural perspective, facades are viewed as interfaces that materialize local identities and social values.

Building on Denis Diderot's reflections on looking and theatricality, Aldo Rossi suggests that the street operates as a kind of voyeuristic passage between architecture and the surrounding urban landscape, a window onto everyday urban life rather than a neutral circulation space. In this sense, as Boullée's *Architecture, Essay on Art* also implies the street guides perception of history and memory through spatial sequences — colonnades, continuous facades and framed vistas — rather than simply serving as a traffic conduit. This perspective is particularly relevant in local urban context, where the composition of street facades directly shapes how different cultural histories and identities are seen, recognised or obscured in everyday urban experience. While these discussions focus on the experiential and cultural dimensions of street space, Chinese scholars have also examined street interfaces, but the Chinese approach has developed several specific emphases. Under conditions of rapid urbanization, much of this literature is closely tied to planning control, urban design regulation, and the administrative management of urban form.¹ It also shows a strong tendency to translate interface quality into measurable indicators, and to connect street and facade studies to city-design requirements, all-element street design guidelines, façade management, and historical conservation practice.²³ More recent work has extended this implementation-oriented tradition through data-driven measurement of frontage permeability and street perception.⁴

1 Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of the PRC, *Chengshi sheji guanli banfa* [Administrative Measures for Urban Design] (Beijing, 2017).

2 Wuhan Municipal Bureau of Natural Resources and Planning et al., “Guanyu jiaqiang Wuhan shi jiedao quan yaosu guihua sheji jianshe de tongzhi” [Notice on Strengthening All-Element Street Planning, Design and Construction in Wuhan], WZRGPF [2019] No. 148, November 5, 2019.

3 Jinan Municipal Housing and Urban-Rural Development Bureau et al., *Jinanshi jianzhu wailimian guanli banfa* [Measures for the Management of Building Façades in Jinan], May 9, 2023.

4 Yuan Shao, Dan Ye, and Yu Ye, “Jiyu jiejing shuju he shendu xuexi de jiedao jiemian shentoulü daguimo cedu yanjiu—yi Shanghai wei li” [Measuring the Transparency of Street Interface Based on Street View Images and Deep Learning: Shanghai Case Study]

According to Cihai, an authoritative Chinese dictionary, a “street” is defined in strictly physical terms as “a relatively wide road flanked by buildings.” Drawing on Bernard Rudofsky, a street cannot be understood in isolation from its surroundings; it is constituted by the continuity and rhythm of the buildings that define its edges. In this sense, the built edge transforms the street from a mere traffic conduit into a setting for everyday life.⁵ A growing body of Chinese scholarship has focused explicitly on the “urban interface” beyond these conceptual accounts. Here, the urban interface is treated as the built edge between buildings and streets, where everyday interaction, display, and spatial transition are organised.

In mid-twentieth-century Chinese architectural discourse, Liang Sicheng’s planning ideas recast traditional street-and-alley fabrics as the connective tissue between metropolitan structure, neighbourhood form and everyday life. He Combined functionalist and garden-city ideals, sought to coordinate ring-and-radial traffic networks, home–work distances and walkable neighbourhood units within a human-centred model of healthy urban living, and argued that the street network of old Beijing should be preserved as a living spatial organism except a backdrop for new monumental axes.⁶

From the late 1970s and 1980s, Wu Liangyong’s theory of human settlement and related urban design practice began to reframe streets and alleys as integral parts of a multi-scalar living environment, emphasising the continuity between courtyard, lane and street as everyday social spaces rather than mere traffic corridors.⁷ Contemporary historical reviews of early PRC planning practice suggest that, under the influence of the Soviet “socialist city” model and the need to serve key industrial projects, master plans for major cities focused heavily on road hierarchies, trunk routes and industrial circulation, with relatively little explicit reflection on the street as an everyday public space.⁸ Against this historical and conceptual backdrop, more recent Chinese scholarship has moved from broad debates about streets and urban form towards explicit analyses of the “urban interface” as a regulated and measurable edge between building and street.

Taking Shanghai as an Example], *Guoji chengshi guihua* [Urban Planning International] 38, no. 6 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.19830/j.upi.2021.241>.

5 Bernard Rudofsky, *Streets for People: A Primer for Americans* (New York: Doubleday, 1969).

6 Sidney Wong, “Searching for a Modern, Humanistic Planning Model in China: The Planning Ideas of Liang Sicheng, 1930–1952,” *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 32, no. 4 (2015): 324–45.

7 Liangyong Wu, *Zhongguo chengshi xingtai yu renju huanjing* [Human Settlements and Urban Form in China] (Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press, 1985), 45–47.

8 Rémi Curien, “Chinese Urban Planning: Environmentalising a Hyper-Functionalist Machine?,” *China Perspectives*, no. 2014/3 (2014): 23–31, <https://doi.org/10.4000/chinapersonpectives.6528>.

Since the early twenty-first century, research on urban street space and interfaces can broadly be divided into two directions. Research on urban street space and interfaces can broadly be divided into two directions: interface studies that focus on morphological control, and public-interface studies that concentrate on behavioural experience and renewal. The first group of work tends to treat the street interface as a key object for shaping street-space form and urban visual order. Han Yong's master's thesis *Urban Street Spatial Interfaces*, for example, starts from the relationship between interface morphology and the shaping of street space. Drawing on research in visual form and visual psychology, it discusses the integration of street spatial interfaces and argues that such integration is a holistic design process characterised by both sequentiality and relationality.⁹ Zhao Xinyi's thesis *Regulatory Design of Street Interfaces* takes the five constitutive elements of the street interface as its point of departure, analyses their constraints and proposes corresponding design strategies, seeking to achieve coherent street edges through regulatory provisions.¹⁰ Feng Ling's thesis *Architectural Interfaces Integrating Street Space* further contends that the lack of overall coherence and continuity in contemporary urban public space is largely due to insufficient visual and spatial linkages between buildings and the city,¹¹ and therefore proposes a street-design strategy that takes the morphological composition of architectural interfaces, oriented towards the urban street-space environment, as its starting point. Building on architectural typology, Zheng Wenmao's thesis *Urban Street Interfaces from a Typological Perspective: A Case Study of Hanguang Road, Xi'an* summarises four principles for street-interface design: practicality, recognisability, continuity and aesthetics.¹² Zhou Yu's thesis *Quantitative Study on Street-Interface Morphology* introduces experimental psychology theory to construct a "physical form–psychological cognition" research framework, quantifying people's perception of the physical attributes of interface geometry and, through indicators such as "interface density", argues that small street blocks and high interface density contribute positively to the formation of high-quality street space.¹³ Taken together, this body of research, drawing on morphology, regulatory planning and quantitative

9 Yong Han, "Chengshi jiedao kongjian jiemian yanjiu" [A Study on the Urban Street Space Interface] (master's thesis, Hefei University of Technology, 2002), 69.

10 Xinyi Zhao, "Jiedao jiemian kongzhixing sheji yanjiu" [Research on the Controlling Design of Street Interface] (master's thesis, Chongqing University, 2007), 5.

11 Ling Feng, "Ronghe jiedao kongjian de jianzhu jiemian yanjiu" [Study on the Architectural Interface Integrating Street Space] (master's thesis, Chongqing University, 2009), 71.

12 Wenmao Zheng, "Leixingxue shijiao xia de chengshi jiedao jiemian yanjiu" [A Typological Perspective on the Urban Street Interface] (master's thesis, Chang'an University, 2009), 60.

13 Yu Zhou, "Jiedao jiemian xingtai de lianghua yanjiu" [Quantitative Study on the Morphology of Street Interface] (master's thesis, Tianjin University, 2014), 12.

analysis, has carefully delineated the constitutive elements of street interfaces and their effects on spatial quality and visual perception, and has provided important formal and control-based foundations for interface integration.

A second group of studies focuses more on the impact of street-space environments on behaviour and everyday life, as well as on the renewal and improvement of street-facing building facades. Cao Fangwei's thesis *Urban Streets Based on Environmental Behaviour Theory*, grounded in environmental behaviour theory, analyses how street-space environments influence urban ways of life and proposes that the design of street landscapes should, starting from human behavioural characteristics, pay attention to diversity, continuity and legibility.¹⁴ Yan Yinfei's thesis *Methods for the Renewal and Transformation of Urban Street-Facing Building Facades: A Case Study of the Facade Improvement Design of Shiling Avenue, Xuanhan, Dazhou* builds an understanding of the renewal and transformation of urban street-facing facades through a review of theories on urban streets and facade design, classifies and analyses the constituent elements of the objects of renewal, and proposes facade renewal strategies including overall street positioning, architectural style control, improvement of supporting facilities and the incorporation of local culture.¹⁵ He Jie's thesis *Research on Urban Public Interfaces in Kaifeng* (Zhengzhou University, 2013) introduces the concept of the "urban public interface", identifies three of its characteristics—specificity, mediating capacity and carrier function—and, on this basis, proposes principles for improving public interfaces in Kaifeng, namely protective renewal, stylistic density and a dual-scale principle, with the aim of guiding the adjustment and optimisation of public interfaces in historic cities. Collectively, these studies understand the street interface as both a stage for public activity and an object of renewal, and emphasise enhancing accessibility, legibility and environmental quality in street spaces through design and regulatory interventions.¹⁶

Taken as a whole, the above master's-level research shows that Chinese discussions of street-space interfaces have, starting from interface morphology and visual perception, developed a relatively complete set of morphological control principles, design strategies and quantitative evaluation methods, and have gradually extended their attention to environmental behaviour, facade renewal and the notion of the "public interface". However, most of this work takes urban streets in relatively

14 Fangwei Cao, "Jiyu huanjing xingweixue lilun xia de chengshi jiedao yanjiu" [Urban Street Research Based on Environmental Behavior Theory] (master's thesis, Hefei University of Technology, 2009), 20.

15 Yinfei Yan, "Chengshi linjie jianzhu limian gengxin gaizao fangfa yanjiu" [Research on the Update and Renovation Methods of Urban Street-Facing Building Facades] (master's thesis, Chongqing University, 2014), 77.

16 Jie He, "Kaifeng chengshi gonggong jiemian yanjiu" [Research on the Urban Public Interface of Kaifeng] (master's thesis, Zhengzhou University, 2013), 74.

homogeneous cultural settings as its objects, focusing on formal optimisation, landscape continuity and stylistic integration, and pays limited attention to how street interfaces in urban context function as sites where cultural symbols, languages and everyday practices are layered and negotiated. At the typological level, these studies often build on individual street cases and lack interface-type systems that can be used to compare different streets and different ethnic settlements. Building on the existing literature on interface morphology and public interfaces, this thesis therefore proposes to understand the “street interface” as a key spatial node through which cultural identities are carried and reconfigured in the everyday life of local urban context. Through the typological classification and comparative analysis of the street facades in key representative areas of Nanning, this study aims to summarize universally applicable strategies for interface integration, addressing the theoretical and methodological gaps in existing research on urban contexts

2 Nanning Urban Spatial Interface Formation

2.1 Formation of urban spatial interfaces in major urban areas

As the urban landscape of Nanning has evolved, so too has the character of its spatial interfaces, which in this chapter refer to the street-facing edge where buildings, plots, and public space meet.¹⁷ The term is used first to describe the public-private edge through which buildings connect to the street. At the same time, to reflect the Chinese discussion of urban interface, it is understood more broadly as a contact surface, boundary, and relational zone between the built environment and street space, through which access, visibility, transition, and everyday activity are organised.¹⁸ In this sense, interface is not limited to facade appearance alone; it also refers to the socio-spatial conditions through which movement, exchange, and control are structured at the boundary between building and street.¹⁹

The periodization used in this chapter is analytical. It is constructed in order to trace changes in Nanning's spatial interfaces together with shifts in urban structure, planning priorities, and modes of spatial production. Rather than assuming one fixed historical division, the phases are identified by combining three kinds of evidence: major historical and planning shifts in the city's development, changes in the dominant spatial logic of streets, plots, and building edges, and visual and documentary materials such as maps, photographs, and planning records. The purpose of this periodization is therefore not to produce a definitive urban history of Nanning, but to establish a historically grounded sequence for comparing interface conditions across time. The historical layers of the city are still visible in the old town, but newer commercial and residential areas are rapidly altering the way streets and facades interact with the public. In the following sections, we will explore how these different spatial interfaces in Nanning's major urban areas contribute to the city's unique architectural and social fabric.

17 Kim Dovey and Stephen Wood, "Public/Private Urban Interfaces: Type, Adaptation, Assemblage," *Journal of Urbanism* 8, no. 1 (2015): 1–16.

18 Han, "A Study on the Urban Street Space Interface," 32.

19 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), *National Model Design Code: Part 2—Guidance Notes* (London: MHCLG, 2021), paras. 134, 156–57.

2.1.1 Traditional walled city and riverfront streets (imperial era-1949)

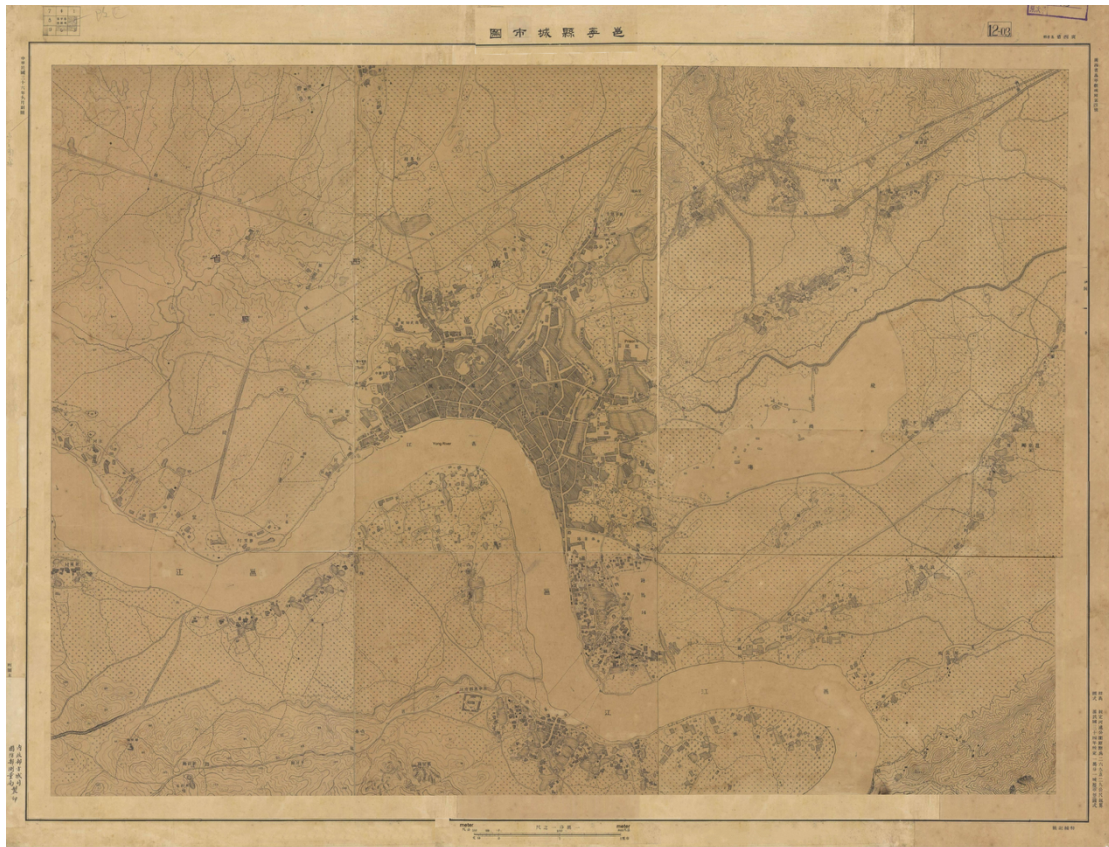


Figure 2-1. Historical map of Yongning County with the Yongjiang River, in present-day Nanning, 1947. Source: Old Maps Online, “Nanning (Historical Map),” accessed January 28, 2026, <https://www.oldmapsonline.org>.

Nanning, historically known as Yongzhou and Yongning, has a documented urban history of more than 1,600 years; successive “Jin, Tang and Song” walled cities were established on a site closely tied to the Yongjiang River, forming an early urban core concentrated in the old city and along the riverfront.²⁰ In this pre-1949 phase, the principal urban interfaces were defined less by isolated monuments than by the everyday edges of streets, alleys and riverbank. Within the old city, narrow lanes lined with low shophouses and mixed shop–residence buildings created continuous

20 Yunli Gu, “Nanning jiefang qian chengshi kongjian geju yanbian” [Evolution of the Urban Spatial Pattern in Nanning Before the Liberation], *Gujian yuanlin jishu* [Ancient Architecture and Garden Technology], no. 1 (2009): 12–17. (in Chinese).

frontages at a fine grain, structuring dense pedestrian corridors and small marketplaces (Figure 2-1.). Along the Yongjiang, embankments, wharves and warehouses formed a linear interface to the water, articulating the boundary between river traffic and the commercial fabric of the city. Recent work on the water heritage of “Greater Nanning” has emphasised how such riverfront spaces, with their



Figure 2-2. Nanning from the West River, August 1914.

Photograph by Reginald Hedgeland. He03-201, Archives & Special Collections, SOAS Library, University of London. From Historical Photographs of China, University



Figure 2-3. Reconstruction of Nanning Zhongshan Road

South Gate Main Street, China Archive, “Old photos of Nanning, Guangxi in the 1930s–40s” collection, image ID 1-220GR05406-50 (street scene, undated).

concentration of tangible and intangible heritage, underpinned the city’s evolution as a trading hub in the upper Pearl River basin.²¹ In practice, these early street and riverfront interfaces hosted mixed markets in which Han, Zhuang and other groups participated side by side, so that ethnic difference was embedded in everyday exchange rather than explicitly staged as cultural display—an important contrast with the later period of themed local urban context streets (Figure 2-2.).

The street interfaces of Nanning’s old city present a distinctive cultural and historical character. Narrow alleys lined with low-rise houses, often with small windows and low-pitched roofs, create a compact and orderly urban space that facilitates neighbourly interaction. For a long period, the old-city markets have been key sites of multi-group interaction and trade (Figure 2-3.). Regional historical studies and surveys of language use in nearby market towns indicate that Han, Zhuang and other groups have jointly participated in markets and street-based commerce, with multiple linguistic and cultural practices coexisting and interacting along the same street interface. In this sense, the streets of the old city function not only as spaces of economic exchange, but also as everyday interfaces of locally diverse cultural contact.

22

21 Tiansheng Li, “Water-Based Logic: The Water Heritage of Greater Nanning and Its Role in Urban Authenticity,” *Journal of Environmental Science and Sustainable Development* 8, no. 2 (2025): 443–66.

22 Seishi Tsukada, “Relations between Han Immigrants and the Zhuang in the Ming–Qing Period: Studies in Zhuang History

2.1.2 Socialist Industrial Expansion and Work-Unit Street Interfaces (1950s–1970s)

Following the functional transformation of Chinese cities after the founding of the PRC, the industrial expansion and construction of work units during the 1950s–1970s produced new street forms and spatial layouts. In this period, Nanning’s urban space gradually shifted from a traditional commercial centre to an administrative and industrial base and began to extend along major arterials and industrial corridors. As



Figure 2-5. On September 28, 1964, the Yongjiang Bridge held its opening ceremony. The bridge is 394.6 meters long and 24 meters wide. Aug 30, 2025. <https://www.gxcic.net/article/ab811fb9b4c42ffdce7310ee77c333ac>



Figure 2-4. The first phase of Caoyang New Village, one of the first socialist workers' villages in China, completed in May 1952. (example from Beijing.) Photograph by Yang Hui. Global Times. Accessed Aug 30, 2025. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/826389.shtml>

functional demands changed, street frontages were no longer conceived primarily as human-oriented public spaces, but increasingly as infrastructural corridors serving production and traffic (Figure 2-5.) . Major streets were widened and straightened, and their edges came to be dominated by work-unit compounds, government office buildings and large slabs of workers’ housing; the street interface was formed by continuous bands of walls, landscaping and building blocks that were generally closed, with few and widely spaced openings. In morphological terms,²³ this configuration translated the Soviet “production city” planning logic into the local context, emphasising road hierarchy and unit boundaries while paying little attention to the fine-grained organisation of streets as everyday public interfaces (Figure 2-4.), and thereby helped to shape the prevailing pattern of urban interfaces in most Chinese cities.

(4),” Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology 14, no. 3 (1989): 329–79, <https://doi.org/10.153021/00003623>.

23 Meng Yang, Fanyu Meng, and Qi Guo, “Woguo chengzhenhua jincheng zhong jiedao gongneng, jiemian he zhuti de renbentezheng yanyan” [The Development of People-Oriented Characteristics of Street Function, Interface and Service Object in the Process of Urbanization in China], *Jingguan sheji* [Landscape Design], no. 6 (2021): 10–17.

2.1.3 Commercial Corridors and Locally Diverse Social Context Branding (1980s–1990s)



Figure 2-6. Shopping center in the 1980s, with the Figure 2-5.

Yongjiang Bridge in the background. Image from the Guangxi Archives website. Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Archives. Accessed January 30, 2025. <https://www.gxdag.org.cn/show/142/3581>



Figure 2-7. Aerial view of Minzu Avenue, Nanning, 1988.

Photograph by Guo Xiaoping. Source: Guangxi News, accessed October 2024, <https://news.gxnews.com.cn/staticpages/20241002/newgx66fd1a73-21635446.shtml>

As China’s reform and opening-up progressed , Nanning began to develop new commercial corridors and night-time market streets both within and beyond the old city, constructing and upgrading a series of commercial streets, pedestrian streets and ethnically themed districts as *Minzu Avenue* and various “ethnic style” streets used facade colours, decorative motifs, ceremonial gateways and multilingual signage to actively embed Zhuang and other minority symbols into the street interface.²⁴ In this phase, context of diverse everyday practices cultural elements were attached to street facades primarily in a scenic and highly symbolised manner, oriented towards consumption and tourism,²⁵ and the tension between such image-making and everyday life practices tends to diminish as urban development becomes more consolidated.

24 Lianfeng Qiu and Nini Zou, “Chengshi fengmao tese yanjiu de xitong neihan ji shijian” [Cityscape Characteristics: Systematic Connotations and Practice], *Guihuashi [Planners]* 25, no. 12 (2009): 26–32. (in Chinese).

25 Zongxing Zheng et al., “Jubei jingji yu guanguang jiazhi zhi wenhua lishi jiequ xingxiao celu gui-hua yanjiu” [Marketing Strategy Planning for Cultural-Historical Districts with Economic and Tourism Value: A Development Case of “Three Streets and Two Alleys” in Nanning, Guangxi], *Zhonghua chuangxin fazhan qikan [Journal of Chinese Innovation and Development]* 5, no. 3 (2021): 21–30.

2.1.4 Polycentric Expansion and Institutionalized Global Modernism (2000s – present)



Figure 2-8. Nanning's first commercial plaza, early Reform-era streetscape. Source: China Weather Network
“<https://gx.weather.com.cn/zt/2017/08/2776141.shtml>,” accessed August 2017.

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Nanning has gradually evolved from a single-centre structure focused on the old city into a multi-centre urban configuration, in which the old city, the Nanhu area and new districts represented by Wuxiang New District jointly constitute the main poles of development. Wuxiang New District in particular concentrates financial, convention-and-exhibition and ecological residential functions, and has developed large clusters of high-rise commercial and residential buildings.²⁶ Along major arterials and urban expressways, this has produced large-section streets with long sight lines, where the urban interface is composed of overlapping layers of glass curtain walls, high-rise towers and massive podia, setback plazas and continuous landscape belts, greatly enlarging the spatial scale of the street, intensifying activity nodes and at the same time weakening the pedestrian grain. In several key Central Business District (CBD) and convention areas, themes related to ethnic minorities and ASEAN are selectively inserted into these composite interfaces of high-rise buildings and open spaces through sculptures, landscape features and media facades.²⁷ Compared with the finely grained shopfront edges and high interface density of the old city's streets and alleys, and with the closed street edges dominated by work-unit compounds in the planned-economy period, this new CBD interface adds a further layer of contemporary landscape characterised by high-rise skylines and large-scale open spaces. As a result, multiple street textures and visual vocabularies formed in different periods coexist within the same urban territory in Nanning, providing a basis for distinguishing.

From the pre-socialist logic of commercial governance, through the work-unit system of the planned economy, to market-oriented redevelopment and state-led CBD construction, these four interface types are not merely differences in aesthetic style

26 Hui Chen and Yingqiang Jiang, “Nanning shi chengshi zongti guihua xiubian de chuangxin yu fansi” [Innovations and Reflections on the Revision of Nanning's Master Urban Plan], *Guihuashi* [Planners] 28, no. 9 (2012): 93–98.

27 Xiaowu Wu, Xuejun Liang, and Xiaoxi Lü, “Shangwu zhongxinqu gongxiang jiedao goujian silu yu shijian” [Ideas and Practices for Building Shared Streets in Central Business Districts], *Guihuashi* [Planners] 37, no. 6 (2021): 82–89.

but the surface expression of institutional shifts in urban production across different periods. In the Chinese context, such transformations in urban form have been driven first and foremost by state planning power institutionalised in law, rather than by the free choices of individual designers or purely spontaneous market forces. The legal and regulatory system that governs urban planning and the cityscape is therefore not a passive “background constraint,” but a fundamental source of urban transformation and of the street interfaces that give it visible form. Tracing the hierarchical structure of China's state organs and its impact on the city helps us to better understand how urban interfaces are produced and the underlying motivations that shape them.

3 Overview of the Legal System of China

Before turning into the specific morphology, characteristics and evolution of the urban interface, it is necessary to clarify a prior question: who are the main planners, builders and transformers of Chinese urban space, and within which legal framework and professional culture of construction and design do they operate? Urban interfaces are not created *ex nihilo* but are the material outcome of spatial practices carried out by identifiable actors under specific institutional arrangements, value orientations and technical norms.

To understand why Chinese street interfaces display continuity in some places, fragmentation or heavy commercialization in others, we need to trace their “shaping power” back to the core actors who dominate the production and renewal of urban space and to the legal–institutional logics that structure their decisions. This shift of focus allows us to move beyond merely describing interface forms and to address the institutional roots, driving mechanisms and constraints that condition their evolution. For this reason, the following section begins with an outline of China’s legal and governmental system as the broader framework within which construction and design practices are embedded.

Legal systems in most countries around the world can be broadly categorized into two major types: the Common Law System and the Civil Law System. In very general terms, common law jurisdictions—such as the United Kingdom, the United States and many former British colonies—rely heavily on judge-made case law, whereas civil law jurisdictions—such as France, Germany, Japan and most of continental Europe—are primarily based on codified statutes.²⁸ The legal order of the People’s Republic of China belongs to the civil law family, shaped by socialist legal traditions from the former Soviet Union and influenced by continental European codes. Under the independent judicial jurisdiction granted by the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong and Macao are permitted to maintain legal systems distinct from those in other parts of China:

1. Mainland China: Civil Law System (primarily influenced by the socialist legal systems of France, Germany, and the former Soviet Union, with reference to several civil law jurisdictions).
2. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: Common Law System (inherited from its colonial suzerain, the United Kingdom).

28 John Henry Merryman and Rogelio Pérez-Perdomo, *The Civil Law Tradition: An Introduction to the Legal Systems of Europe and Latin America*, 3rd ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007).

3. Macao Special Administrative Region: Civil Law System (inherited from its colonial suzerain, Portugal).

Under the constitutional arrangements of the PRC, Hong Kong and Macao retain distinct legal systems: Hong Kong operates under a common law system inherited from the United Kingdom, while Macao maintains a civil law system derived from Portuguese law.²⁹ Against this background, the remainder of this section focuses on the structure of the mainland Chinese legal system as the institutional context for urban planning and for the regulation of streets, facades and other elements of the urban interface.

²⁹ State Council Information Office of the PRC, *The Socialist System of Laws with Chinese Characteristics* (Beijing: State Council, 2011).

3.1 China's Legal System and Its Relevance to Urban

Space Production

Normative Level	Legal / Regulatory Instrument	Core Content	Specific Provisions	Enforcement Authority
Constitution	Constitution of the People's Republic of China	Fundamental principles: State ownership of natural resources; protection of cultural heritage.	-	Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD), National People's Congress (NPC)
Laws	Urban and Rural Planning Law	Urban master plans must conserve historic landscapes and natural features.	Guangxi's enforcement regulations invoke its authorization.	Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR)
	Cultural Relics Protection Law	Heritage restoration requires approval; prohibits damage to historic settings.	Nanning historic district repairs require filing with Guangxi cultural authorities.	National Cultural Heritage Administration (NCHA)
Administrative Regulations	Regulations on Protection of Historic Cities, Towns and Villages	Compulsory conservation plans with building height/street scale controls.	Basis for Nanning's "Three Streets Two Lanes" conservation rules.	Provincial governments
	Regulations on Scenic Areas	Construction must align with scenic landscape characteristics.	Applied in Guilin Li River Scenic Area.	MOHURD, National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA)
Provincial Regulations	Guangxi Regulations on Promoting Ecological Civilization (2024)	Establishes Mountain Protection Catalog; restricts development in karst landforms.	▪ Ban on quarrying in protected mountains	Department of Natural Resources of Guangxi
			▪ Building height limits along Beibu Gulf coast.	
	Guangxi Regulations on Integrated Urban Law Enforcement (2021)	Authorizes demolition of illegal structures in heritage conservation zones.	Urban management bureaus may seal violation sites.	City/County Urban Law Enforcement Bureaus

Table 1. Hierarchy of Legal Instruments Shaping Urban Planning and Cityscape Governance in China (with a Focus on Guangxi and Nanning).

Normative Level	Legal / Regulatory Instrument	Core Content	Specific Provisions	Enforcement Authority
Municipal Regulations	Ordinance on Comprehensive Urban Management Enforcement	It centralizes multiple functions including city appearance, traffic order, and market supervision into unified enforcement	City/county governments may establish integrated enforcement departments empowered to lawfully punish local violations including construction infractions, noise, dust, restaurant fumes, open burning, illegal parking, dumping of waste into rivers, and unlicensed operations.	Urban Management Office of Nanning
	Wuxiang district Technical Guidelines for Urban Appearance and Color Control	This guideline provides clear specifications for the Architectural Appearance and Color Control in Wuxiang New Area.	It standardizes design styles and material specifications for street facades, shop signs, lighting, etc., integrating with sponge-city principles and green development.	Wuxiang District Committee
	Nanning Regulations on Historic District Conservation (Draft)	Protection of street facades, spatial texture, and traditional scale.	Unified signage for street-front shops Expert review for renovations.	Nanning Culture and Tourism Bureau
Local Government Rules	Nanning Rules on Urban Planning Management	25m minimum building setback from main roads	Residential building width $\leq 60\text{m}$	Nanning Natural Resources Bureau
		Continuous street frontage requirements.	Billboards must not obscure historic buildings.	

For clarity, Table 1 has been prepared to illustrate China's legal system, characterized by its unitary structure with the Constitution as the supreme legal authority. Article 5 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China explicitly states: "No laws, administrative regulations, or local regulations may contravene the Constitution." The Constitution establishes the leadership role of the Communist

Party of China (CPC) and the system of people's congresses as the fundamental political system. It stipulates the fundamental rights and duties of citizens, forming the foundation of the entire legal system. The sources of law primarily include statutory legislation (laws, regulations, rules) and legal interpretations (legislative interpretations, judicial interpretations), excluding case law. In the Chinese context, “laws” refer to statutes enacted by the National People’s Congress and its Standing Committee; “regulations” comprise nationwide administrative regulations issued by the State Council and local regulations adopted by provincial- and city-level people’s congresses to implement and localise higher-level law; and “rules” (guizhang) are departmental or local government rules that provide technical standards and detailed procedures for enforcing laws and regulations within a specific sector or jurisdiction, and may not conflict with any higher-level norm.³⁰

3.1.1 The Normative Hierarchy of Law and the Urban Landscape

China’s contemporary legal system is often described as a “socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics,” denoting a comprehensive framework of laws shaped by both socialist ideology and indigenous context.³¹ This architecture is rooted in a civil-law-style codification: the entirety of PRC law is divided into seven major legal domains (e.g. constitutional law, civil-commercial law, administrative law, economic law, social law, criminal law, and procedural law) and structured into roughly three hierarchical levels of authority. In practice, law and politics are deeply intertwined (“fa zheng he yi”),³² ensuring that formal laws align with Party-policy objectives.

In the Chinese legal system, not all branches of law exert direct influence on the production of urban space. Among the seven major legal branches of the legal system with Chinese characteristics, three categories are directly responsible for shaping the street interface:

Constitutional Law: The Constitution establishes fundamental principles affecting urban form—most importantly state ownership of all urban land, which gives the state exclusive authority over the allocation of land-use rights and the power to approve, modify or remove construction projects.³³ This framework centralises spatial decision-making and defines who ultimately holds the power to shape streets, facades and other public-facing elements of the urban environment.

30 *National People's Congress, Zhonghua renmin gongheguo lifafa [Legislation Law of the People's Republic of China] (adopted 2000, amended 2023), arts. 2, 7, 79.*

31 State Council Information Office of the PRC, Socialist System of Laws.

32 Sida Liu, “The Shape of Chinese Law” (lecture, New York University School of Law, New York, n.d.).

33 *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo xianfa [Constitution of the People's Republic of China], art. 10.*

Administrative Law: Administrative law provides the operational basis for the governance of urban form. Key statutes such as the Urban and Rural Planning Law, the Land Administration Law, and the Administrative Licensing Law regulate building height, setbacks, massing and construction approval procedures. Crucially, the Planning Law requires that all construction comply with legally binding controls on “building facades and colours”,³⁴ while national city-appearance regulations mandate the management of street-facing facades, shop signs and advertisements.³⁵ These laws constitute the primary legal mechanisms governing the morphological and visual characteristics of street interfaces.

Social Law: Social law influences the treatment of historic districts, workers’ housing areas and neighbourhood environments. Instruments such as the Regulations on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages impose strict requirements on street scale, materials, colour and facade continuity, ensuring that historic street interfaces retain their spatial logic and visual coherence.³⁶

Therefore, these legal branches form the institutional basis through which Chinese street interfaces are produced, transformed and maintained. Rather than being the outcome of individual design choices or market preference, the physical edges of streets are the visible surface of a multi-layered legal and administrative order.

3.1.2 The Multi-Tiered Legislative System and its Spatial Competencies

China implements a “unified multi-tiered” legislative system (tongyi fengcengci de lifatizhi), each with defined competencies that extend into spatial planning and urban development. At the national level, the National People’s Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee enact laws (falü) that form the highest normative authority.³⁷ These include foundational statutes like the Land Administration Law and Urban-Rural Planning Law,³⁸ which set unified principles for land use and city planning across the country. The State Council, as the top executive, issues administrative regulations (xingzheng fagui) to implement laws and provide detailed rules.³⁹ Key

34 State Council of the PRC, Chengshi rongmao he huanjing weisheng guanli tiaoli [Regulations on City Appearance and Environmental Sanitation] (issued 1982, revised 2011).

35 State Council of the PRC, Lishi wenhua mingcheng mingzhen mingcun baohu tiaoli [Regulations on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages], Order No. 524 (2008, amended 2017).

36 National People’s Congress, Zhonghua renmin gongheguo chengxiang guihua fa [Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People’s Republic of China] (adopted 2007, amended 2019).

37 Constitution of the PRC, art. 62.

38 Urban and Rural Planning Law (adopted 2007, amended 2019), art. 3; Zhonghua renmin gongheguo tudi guanli fa [Land Administration Law of the People’s Republic of China] (2020), arts. 2–4.

39 Legislation Law of the PRC (amended 2023), arts. 71–73.

regulations in the urban domain—such as those on city planning procedures or urban design standards—bridge broad laws with technical specifics, ensuring nationwide standards in street layout, building safety, and facade design.⁴⁰ Crucially, China’s legislative hierarchy assigns spatial planning responsibilities at each level: for example, the NPC’s Urban-Rural Planning Law mandates a cascade of plans from national to city level, while local governments are empowered to manage urban planning and construction matters through delegated authority. Under the new spatial planning system, this hierarchy is reflected in a top-down alignment of plans: national spatial plans provide strategic visions, provincial plans coordinate regional land use, and municipal/county plans concentrate on detailed implementation.⁴¹ Lower-level plans and rules must conform to higher-level frameworks, standardizing core aspects of urban form (e.g. zoning categories, building setbacks) across the country.⁴²

40 Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development (MOHURD), *Chengshi sheji guanli daoze* [Urban Design Guidelines] (Beijing, 2016). (in Chinese); Legislation Law of the PRC (amended 2023), arts. 72–79; *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo minzu quyuan zuzhifa* [Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy] (2001), arts. 22–24.

41 Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), *Quanguo guotu kongjian guihua gangyao (2021–2035 nian)* [National Territorial Spatial Planning Outline (2021–2035)] (Beijing, 2021).

42 Li Zhang and Tao Lin, “The Logic of Hierarchical Spatial Planning in China,” *Planning Theory and Practice* 22, no. 3 (2021): 401–18.

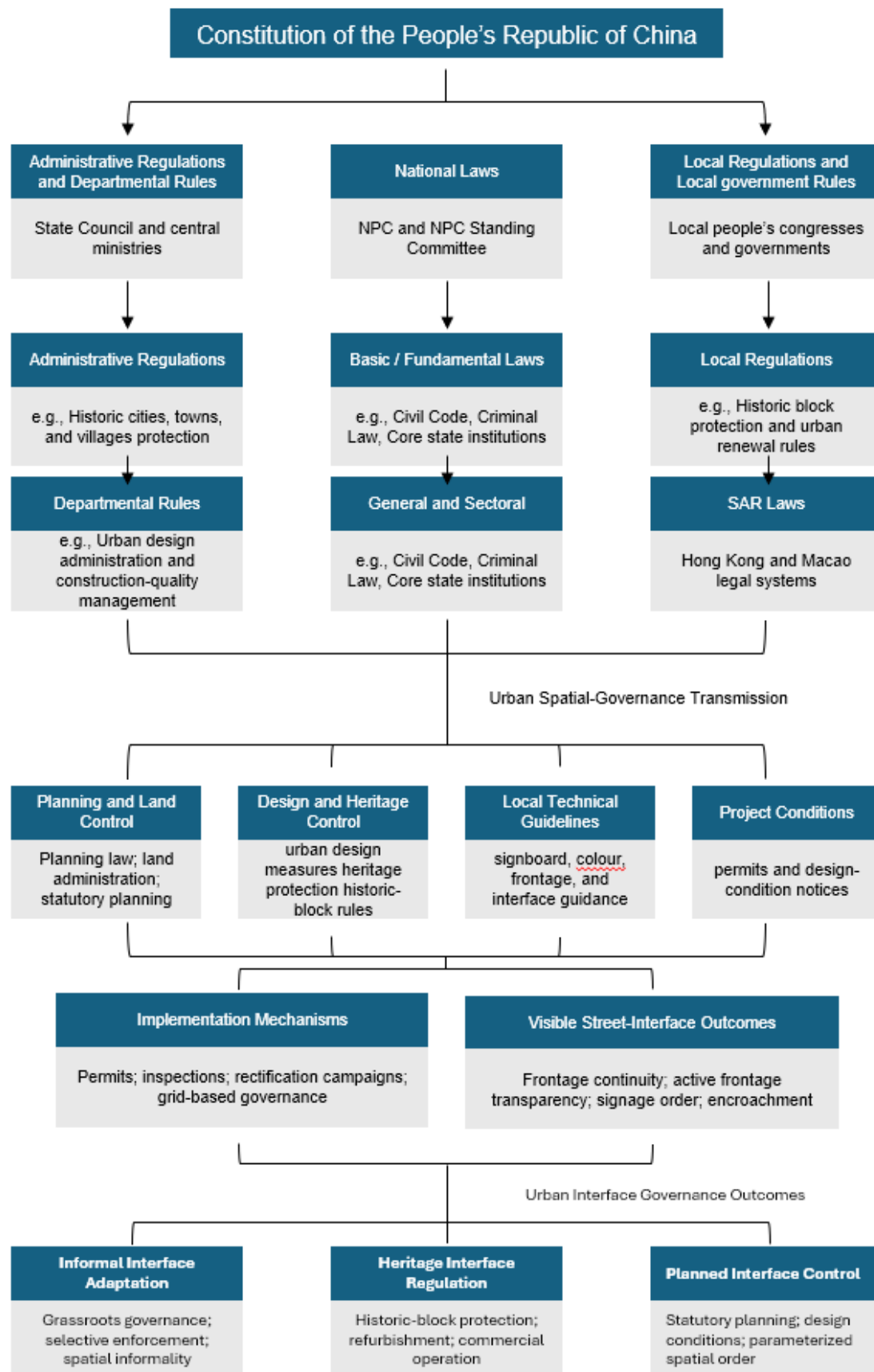


Figure 3-1. Chinese Legal System Hierarchy Tree Diagram

could map this multi-tier legislative and planning hierarchy — a pyramid from national laws and State Council regulations down to local statutes and plans — indicating how each level contributes to regulating space and street environments.

3.2 From Law to Form: Transmission Mechanisms of Spatial Control

3.2.1 How Norms Materialize as Built Interfaces

A core inquiry is how abstract legal norms travel through institutions to become tangible street environments. In China, this occurs via a cascade of implementation that links high-level policies to on-the-ground design. At the top of the chain, broad state objectives (e.g. “beautify city streets” or “ensure public safety”) are encoded into laws, regulations, and national standards.⁴³ These norms are then carried into spatial plans and technical guidelines. For example, a national statute might mandate heritage protection, which leads planning authorities to include facade continuity requirements in local urban design plans. The hierarchical governance structure ensures that each level transmits requirements to the next: as Zhao and Pan note, a “transmission mechanism between the upper and lower levels” of planning guides lower-tier plans and ultimately “translates” high-level goals “into rules for land use control”,⁴⁴ which then shape concrete outcomes. Once norms are codified in plans and codes, they are enforced through the project approval process. This is where legal norms truly materialize as physical form. Developers must design their buildings in compliance with the zoning, height limits, facade materials or other criteria set by plans/codes, or else fail to obtain planning permits. The “one notice, three permits” system illustrates this stepwise causation: a city master plan (guided by law) leads to a detailed plan; that plan imposes conditions on a site; the site’s design is reviewed via permits for conformity; only then can construction proceed.⁴⁵ Through this chain, an initial norm (say, a bylaw requiring uniform building setbacks on a commercial street) gets passed down to architects and builders, who implement it in the building’s frontage. This causal flow is summarized in (Figure 3-2.) as a transmission mechanism from legal norms to built interface outcomes.

43 MOHURD, *Chengshi rongmao zhengzhi zhidao yijian* [Guidelines on Urban Appearance and Environmental Improvement] (Beijing, 2013). (in Chinese)

44 Min Zhao and Haixia Pan, “Construction Logic and Implementation Strategies of Spatial Planning System of China,” *Frontiers of Urban and Rural Planning* 1, no. 6 (2023): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44243-022-00001-8>.

45 *Urban and Rural Planning Law of the PRC* (amended 2019).

However, from the perspective of urban management authorities (government), they tend to favor demolishing and redeveloping older housing stock. This approach has contributed to China's rapid economic growth and shaped resident attitudes towards property purchasing and building renovation. To avoid over-generalisation, this can be read as an implementation tendency rather than a universal rule: when local fiscal and performance incentives reward land-based

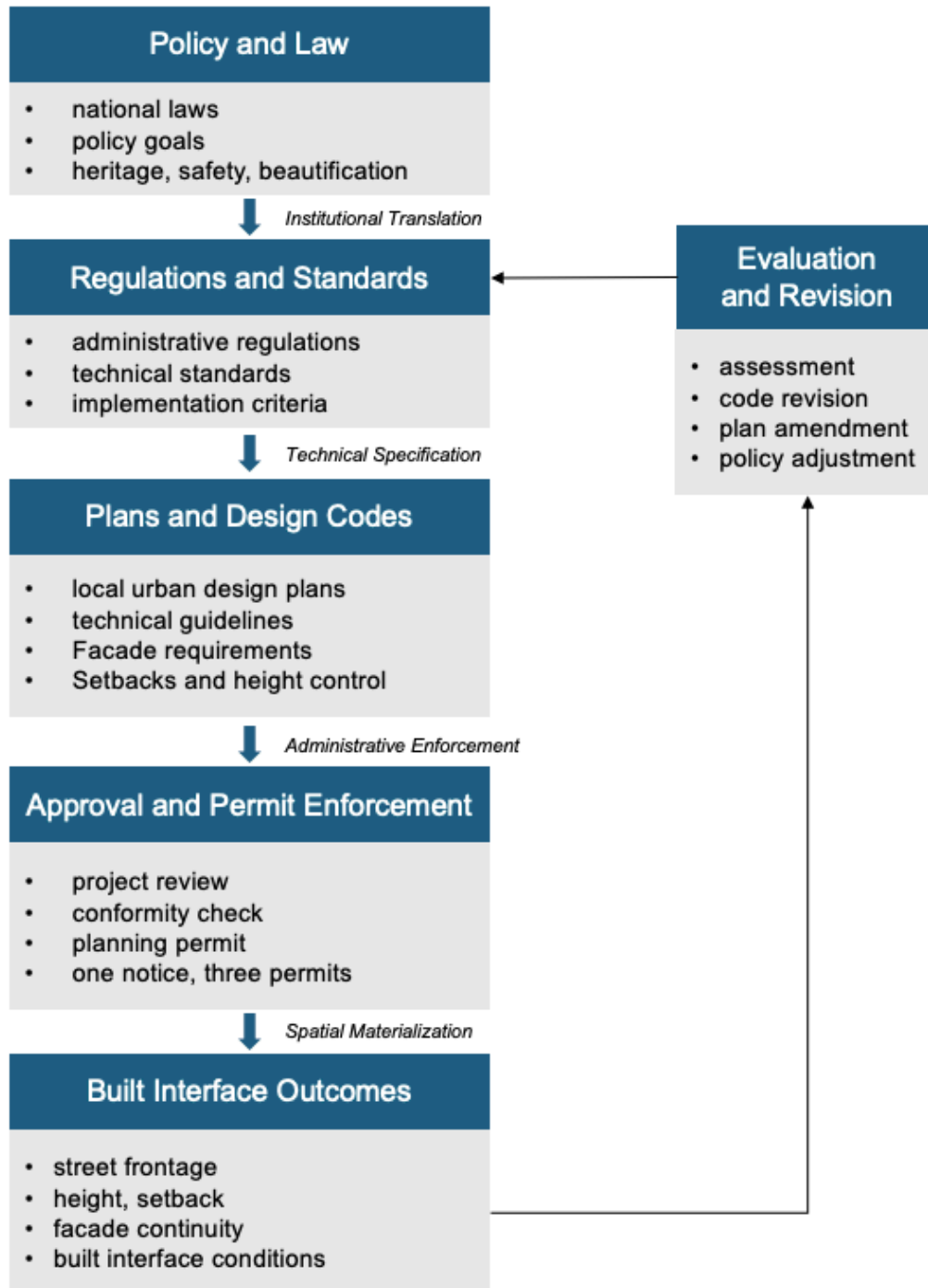


Figure 3-2. Transmission Mechanism from Legal Norms to Built Interface

development, demolition-and-reconstruction may become administratively attractive compared with incremental maintenance, and street interfaces can be treated as

replaceable “project outputs” rather than cumulative public edges. These dynamics will be explored in greater detail in subsequent case studies.

3.2.2 Hierarchical Governance and Spatial Standardization

China’s top-down governance produces a strong standardising effect on urban form nationwide.⁴⁶ Under the hierarchical planning system, municipal and county plans must conform to provincial objectives that implement national priorities, and this vertical consistency is reinforced through legal mandates and administrative review/approval mechanisms, including higher-level veto power over key plans.⁴⁷ As a result, road networks, zoning categories and building layout rules tend to follow ministry-issued model codes (e.g., standardised street widths, block sizes and land-use classifications), yielding replicated streetscape patterns across cities. Nationwide development and city-image campaigns (e.g., “National Civilized City”⁴⁸ and “Garden City”⁴⁹) further translate central criteria into local street upgrades—often through similar packages of paving, lighting and facade refurbishment. This system provides baseline quality control and predictability (e.g., safety standards and public-space ratios), but it can also generate formulaic designs with limited sensitivity to local context; recent policy discourse therefore emphasises “appropriate diversity within unified standards,” allowing constrained local variation while maintaining a unified regulatory framework.⁵⁰

3.2.3 Transformation of Legal Intent into Urban Aesthetics

Laws and regulations in China do not only dictate technical parameters; they also carry intentional visions of what cities should look and feel like, which ultimately influence urban aesthetics. The transformation from legal intent to visual form can be seen in the way planning documents and development controls embed aesthetic objectives.⁵¹ For instance, a national policy promoting “eco-civilization” and

46 Lin He, Rui Tan, and Chengqing Wu, “Evolution Logic of Urban Spatial Growth Governance and Its Enlightenment in China: From a Perspective of Spatial Governance,” *Journal of Urban Management* 14 (2025): 590–606.

47 Zhao and Pan, “Construction Logic and Implementation Strategies,” 5.

48 Central Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress, “Zhongyang jingshen wenming jianshe zhidao weiyuanhui guanyu pingxuan biao Zhang quanguo wenming chengshi, wenming cunzhen, wenming danwei de zanxing banfa” [Interim Measures on the Selection and Commendation of National Civilized Cities, Civilized Villages and Towns, and Civilized Units], National Health Commission of the PRC, April 29, 2006.

49 Yingjie Zhang et al., “Designating National Forest Cities in China: Does the Policy Improve the Urban Living Environment?” *Forest Policy and Economics* 125 (2021): 102400, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.forpol.2021.102400>.

50 He, Tan, and Wu, “Evolution Logic,” 590–606; Zhao and Pan, “Construction Logic,” 1–14.

51 Zhao and Pan, “Construction Logic and Implementation Strategies,” 2–3.

livability may be translated by planners into design mandates for green belts, uniform building heights for a pleasing skyline, or traditional architectural motifs in new projects. At the highest level, China's leaders often articulate aesthetic goals for cities: President Xi Jinping urged that Beijing's city plan should "grasp the strategic positioning, spatial pattern, and element configuration" to build a capital with cultural and historic depth. In China's governance setting, such top-level statements typically enter the planning system through an institutional chain: they are first disseminated via Party-state media, then internalised in guidance issued by competent authorities, and finally operationalised through statutory planning, approval, and project-review procedures. The State Council's approval of Shanghai's Master Plan emphasized shaping "distinctive features," improving the environment, and building an "admirable city" with a modern yet culturally rich image.⁵² Within China's governance setting, such top-level statements matter because they are frequently reiterated in official planning directives and then consolidated into planning documents whose approved content is treated as binding for subsequent regulation and project review. These statements of intent are echoed in legal and regulatory texts – for example, city master plans (which have legal effect once approved) now routinely include chapters on urban character, specifying guidelines for facade styles, color palettes, roof forms, and streetscape design to achieve the desired image.⁵³ In practice, the legal intent influences aesthetics through mechanisms like design review committees and local urban design regulations. Many Chinese cities require proposed building designs to undergo review for consistency with the city's planning intent (often described as fitting the "city style and features").⁵⁴ Thus, if the legal intent is to preserve a historical folk style in a local urban context quarter, new buildings might be required by regulation to incorporate certain regional decorative elements or materials.⁵⁵ If the intent is a modern skyline, regulations may limit eclectic styles and enforce clean, glassy facades. Over the past decade, the government even issued directives against "bizarre" architecture, reflecting a legal-policy intent to favor dignified, traditionally inspired aesthetics; those directives have filtered down into technical guidelines discouraging outlandish facade designs.⁵⁶ The outcome is that aesthetic governance becomes legible in the landscape: aligned rooflines, regulated

52 Zhao and Pan, "Construction Logic and Implementation Strategies," 11–12.

53 Urban and Rural Planning Law of the PRC (amended 2019).

54 Urban and Rural Planning Law of the PRC (2019 amendment).

55 State Council, Regulations on Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities.

56 Central Committee of the CPC and the State Council, "Guanyu jinyibu jiaqiang chengshi guihua jianshe guanli gongzuo de roushan yijian" [Opinions on Further Strengthening the Management of Urban Planning and Construction], February 21, 2016.

signage, curated public art, and themed

3.2.4 Institutional Implementation and Street-Level Realities

3.2.4.1 The Re-Translation of Legal Norms in Administrative Practice

While the law on the books provides a framework, its effect on street facades is mediated by administrative practices and local political–economic priorities. In implementation, formal norms are often re-interpreted through (i) goal substitution (growth and fiscal incentives overriding control objectives), (ii) procedural flexibility (negotiation, exceptions, or “regularisation” after construction), and (iii) selective enforcement shaped by leadership attention and inter-bureau coordination. In practice, key planning matters may be decided through informal coordination arenas where commercial or political considerations can outweigh technical criteria.⁵⁷ Consequently, street interfaces can depart from written norms via tolerated facade violations, negotiated signage or awnings, and project-specific exceptions

3.2.4.2 Street-Level Bureaucracy and Community-Based Control

At street level, interface regulation is further shaped by front-line discretion and community involvement. Inspectors and urban-management teams act as “street-level bureaucrats” who translate rules into everyday decisions—whether to ignore, correct, or remove an unauthorised awning or sign.⁵⁸ In parallel, community organisations (e.g., homeowners’ committees) may influence facade maintenance and shared-space management, although their operation is often embedded in, and constrained by, local street-office and party–community arrangements.⁵⁹ Together, discretionary enforcement and constrained participation contribute to a negotiated street interface: the street’s visible outcomes reflect not only formal design codes, but also the ways rules are interpreted, implemented, and responded to in daily governance.

57 Richard Kremzner, “Managing Urban Land in China: The Emerging Legal Framework and Its Role in Development and Reforms,” *Pacific Rim Law & Policy Journal* 7, no. 3 (1998): 651–52.

58 Kremzner, “Managing Urban Land in China,” 651.

59 Shu-mei Cheng, “Cong ‘fengbi xitong’ dao ‘kaifang xitong’: Zhongguo chengshi jiceng zhili xitong de goujian, yanbian yu zhuandeng” [From ‘Closed System’ to ‘Open System’: The Construction, Evolution and Transition of Grassroots Governance System in Urban China], *Qianzhan jikan* [Prospect Quarterly] 9, no. 1 (2008): 119. (in Chinese).

4 Field Trip Studying 3 Typical Areas

4.1 Wanxiu Village: Informality and Interface Disorder under Policy Ambiguity Overview

Wanxiu Village is located in Xixiangtang District, Nanning City, and is a typical "urban village" form: high-density rental housing, high population mobility, mixed business formats, and spatial renewal to "add-separate-attach" As the main way, the street space has long been under the pressure



Figure 4-1. Map of Wanxiu Village. Source: Base map and satellite imagery from Amap

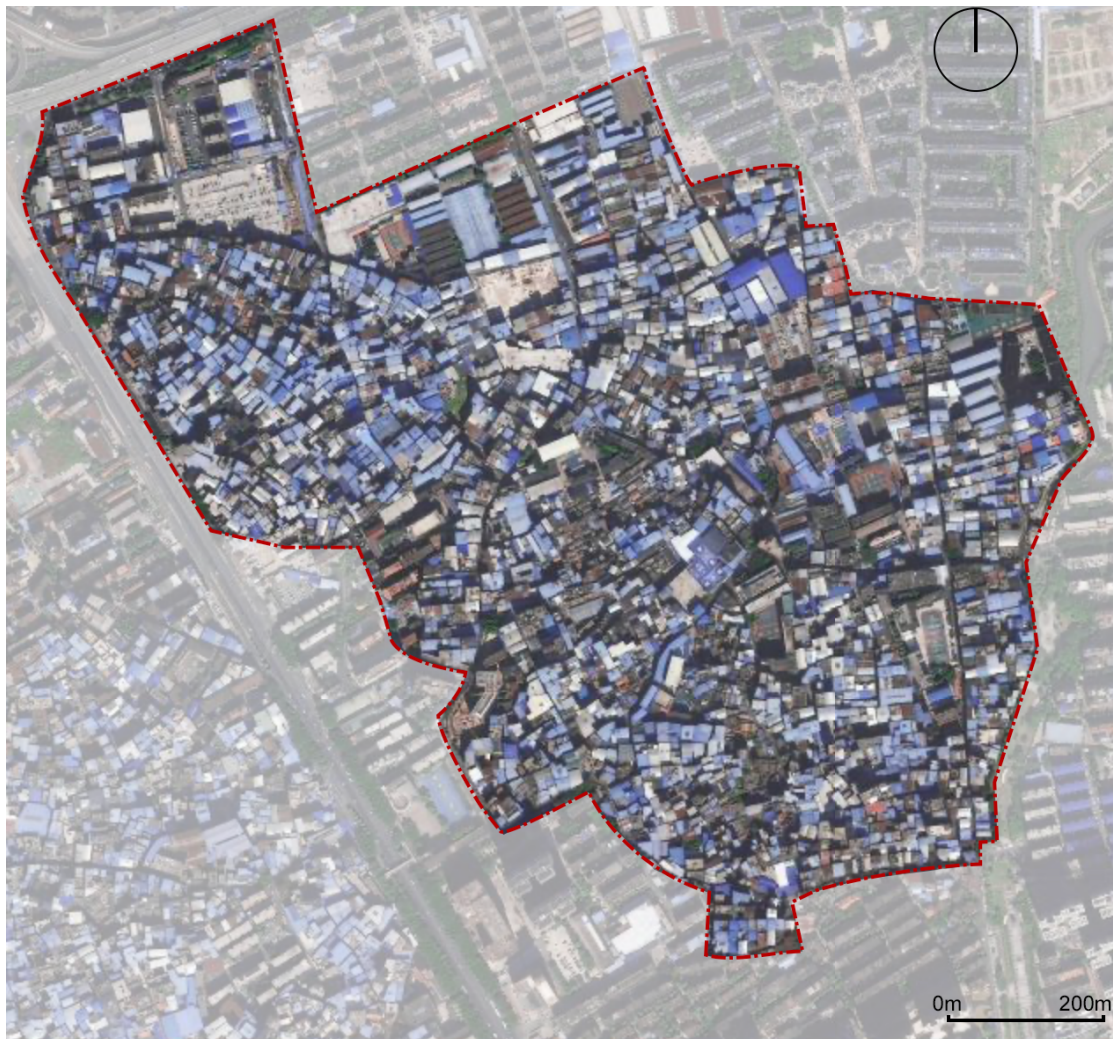


Figure 4-2. Aerial view of Wanxiu Village highlighting informal rooftop extensions. Source: Base map and satellite imagery from Amap

of compound governance such as fire protection, sanitation, traffic and public security. This case is not formed without rules, but is densely existing with rules, but is selective, sporty and negotiated in grassroots implementation, thus translating the "normativeness" of the legal framework into a negotiable order (negotiated order). Judging from the public materials and information disclosure texts of grassroots governance practice, Wanxiu Village has long been in the "grid governance - creation and rectification of civilized cities" Under the compound governance framework. First, the public reply of the relevant departments of Nanning City to the CPPCC proposal clearly mentioned: Wanxiu Village, Beihu Street, relies on the operation of the village grid management station, divides the whole village into 50 grid units (In urban villages, grid governance refers to a spatially segmented management approach in which neighbourhoods are divided into small units for routine monitoring and basic coordination at the street level) and configures grid forces to carry out information collection and dynamic management, and respond to issues such as floating population governance, public security and safety hazards.⁶⁰ Second, in the context of civilization creation, the local civilization creation report will "optimize the ground (or pavement), beautify the storefront, and simplify the sky (or facade)" As a typical path of interface improvement and image improvement in urban villages, it embodies the performance logic oriented by visual indicators and spatial improvement.⁶¹⁶² The above materials together constitute the empirical starting point of this section: in the context of urban villages, the institutional chain is more likely to present "weak planning permission, strong daily control, and intermittent rectification and update" The legal normative objectives are thus translated into negotiable and selectively implemented street order, and finally deposited into observable spatial results such as interface attachments, encroachment methods and boundary devices. Based on this, the following will be along the lines of "Law - Planning - Permitting - Enforcement / Renewal - Daily Management" The implementation chain of "Normative Evidence-Governance Evidence-Spatial Evidence-Cognitive Evidence" is carried out The four types of materials correspond to "should-implementation-result-feedback" to

60 Nanning Municipal Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission, "Dafu zhengxie Nanning shi di shi'er jie wei yuan hui di san ci hui yi di 12.03.344 hao tian: Guanyu jiaqiang chengshi minzu gongzuo duiwu jianshe de jianyi" [Reply to Proposal No. 12.03.344 of the 3rd Session of the 12th CPPCC Nanning Committee], July 11, 2023, accessed Jan 20, 2026, <https://mw.nanning.gov.cn/zwgk/fdzdgknr/jytajggk/t5774839.html>.

61 Guangxi Civilization Network, "Nanning Wanxiu cun: Wenming zhili rang chengzhongcun bian cheng xingfu jia" [Nanning Wanxiu Village: Civilized Governance Turns an Urban Village into a Happier Home], May 8, 2021 accessed January 1, 2026, https://gx.wenming.cn/wmcj/202105/t20210508_6041279.htm.

62 China.org.cn, "Good Practices Make a Big Difference: Nanning's Urban Villages Take on a New Look," May 13, 2021, accessed January 1, 2026, https://www.nanning.china.com.cn/2021-05/13/content_41559783.htm.

ensure that a verifiable logical closed loop is formed between the case narrative and the theoretical framework of chapters 2 and 3.

4.1.1 Mechanism Explanation: The Institutional Production of Aestheticised Order

In the process of urban renewal led by the Chinese government, laws and regulations at the national and local levels provide basic institutional boundaries for the evolution of the spatial form of neighborhoods. The Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China (amended in 2019) establishes the principles of "urban and rural coordination, rational layout, conservation and intensification, planning first and then construction", requiring that the improvement of the living environment, ecological protection, and the continuation of historical and cultural heritage and local features be taken into account when formulating and implementing



Figure 4-3. Entrance interface of Wanxiu Village, marking the transition from arterial road to urban village



Figure 4-4. Negotiated use of alley space through everyday market practices in Wanxiu Village



Figure 4-5. Kindergarten situated along a narrow (left), mixed-traffic street in Wanxiu Village

plans.⁶³ Under the framework of this law, the overall urban planning and control detailed planning must make binding arrangements for the scale of the block, the construction intensity, the building height and setback, the road and public space system, and the functional distribution, and limit the spatial conditions generated by the street interface from the source. In line with this, the "Regulations on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages" promulgated by the State Council and local regulations on the protection of historical and cultural blocks regard the pattern, style and continuation of life of historical blocks and historical buildings as public interests that need to be maintained in

⁶³ Urban and Rural Planning Law of the PRC (amended 2019).

accordance with the law.⁶⁴

Since entering the stage of "urban renewal action", first-tier cities represented by Shanghai, Shenzhen, Beijing, Guangzhou, etc. have successively formulated the "Urban Renewal Regulations" or local regulations at the same level. For example, the Shanghai Urban Renewal Regulations, which came into effect in 2021, define urban renewal as improving infrastructure and public services, improving living quality, and continuing the urban context within the scope of existing construction land, emphasizing the combination of planning guidance, government coordination and public participation.⁶⁵ Relevant policy commentaries also pointed out that as of 2021, the four first-tier cities in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen have passed urban renewal regulations or similar regulations, elevating urban renewal from policy practice to local legislation.⁶⁶ On the one hand, it regulates construction activities through planning and licensing mechanisms, locks in the structure and interface scale of the block, and intervenes in the visual image and use status of the street through tools such as historical protection, style guidance and interface control.

Under the above legal and policy framework, Wanxiu Village in Beihu Street, Xixiangtang District, Nanning City presents a typical urban village situation. Public reports generally regard it as one of the largest and most populous urban villages in Nanning and even Guangxi, located in the mature built-up area of the city, surrounded by Beihu Road, Mingxiu Road, Youai Road and Xiuxiang Avenue and other urban trunk roads, covering an area of about 1,200 acres.⁶⁷ The road system in the village is narrow and tortuous, and the scale of streets and alleys changes frequently (Figure 4-5.), the overall spatial structure shows the characteristics of high density and low openness. The scale of the registered population of Wanxiu Village is limited, but the permanent population is mainly composed of a large number of foreign tenants, and the multi-storey self-built buildings are divided into highly fragmented rental units after repeated additions and internal subdivisions, so that the actual residential and commercial intensity of the block far exceeds the expectations of the surrounding statutory planning. As a result, the street interface has naturally evolved into a highly mixed state of use: the first floor is mostly catering, retail and small service industries,

⁶⁴ State Council, Regulations on Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities.

⁶⁵ Shanghai shi chengshi gengxin tiaoli [Regulations of Shanghai Municipality on Urban Renewal] (adopted August 25, 2021), accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.lawinfochina.com/display.aspx?id=38995&lib=law>.

⁶⁶ Jing Wang, "Chengshi gengxin de shenke neihan yu shijian lujing" [The Profound Connotation and Practice Pathways of Urban Renewal], Renmin luntan [People's Tribune], November 25, 2021, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.rmlt.com.cn/2021/1125/632714.shtml>.

⁶⁷ Guangxi News Network, "Why Does Guangxi's Largest Urban Village Make People 'Talk about the Village with Fear'? Understanding Wanxiu Village," Guangxi News, March 24, 2014.

while the upper floor is constantly divided into rental living spaces, forming an interface landscape of commercial signs, living balconies, temporary structures and vertical transportation facilities. This "high-density-strong mixed" population and spatial structure makes the street interface of Wanxiu Village continue to bear the pressure of life, operation and traffic superposition in the daily state: external operation, accumulation of attachments and space encroachment continue to spill over to the street edge and lane inside, and the governance needs of fire protection, safety and sanitation are closely intertwined with residents' livelihoods at the micro scale, which constitutes the basis for the specific scene of the conflict between the "consultative order" and the interface in the later analysis. (Figure 4-4.)

4.1.2 Grassroots Governance Structure: Grid Governance and "Retention and Renovation" Orientation

Wanxiu Village has not entered the stage of overall demolition and reconstruction, but mainly relies on the grassroots governance mechanism⁶⁸ to maintain space and social operation. The village is included in the administrative management system of the sub-district office, and at the same time assumes some daily governance functions through autonomous organizations such as village committees or community neighborhood committees. In response to problems such as high-density residence, public security prevention and control, fire safety and environmental sanitation, local governments have introduced a grid governance model, divided villages into several management units, and assigned full-time or part-time grid members to each grid, forming a closed loop of "daily inspection-information collection-problem reporting-departmental disposal".⁶⁹ Compared with the implementation of structural reconstruction through planning and land means, this model emphasizes the reduction of risks and the maintenance of acceptable order through steady-state governance under the premise that the existing spatial pattern remains basically unchanged.

In line with this, the urban renewal policy at the national level encourages more retention and renovation rather than large-scale demolition and reconstruction in the existing built-up area through bottom-line requirements such as "preventing large-scale demolition and construction", "adhering to the simultaneous implementation of

68 Benjamin L. Read, *Roots of the State: Neighborhood Organization and Social Control in Beijing* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012).

69 Xinhua News Agency, "Guangxi Wanxiu cun wanggehua guanli pojie 'chengzhongcun' zhili kunjian" [Guangxi Wanxiu Village Uses Grid-Based Management to Solve 'Urban Village' Governance Dilemmas], February 5, 2016, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://nanning.baogaosu.com/xinwen/万秀村网格化管理破解城中村/43353756/>

retention, reform and demolition, and focusing on retention and utilization". ⁷⁰Under this policy orientation, local practice often tends to make gradual improvements through means such as public facilities, environmental improvement and micro-renewal, rather than one-time demolition of the entire village. In Wanxiu Village, the creation of civilization at the district and street levels and the practice of "urban village improvement and improvement", that is, through the "three modernizations" of "ground optimization, store beautification, and sky (facade) simplification" to promote road cleanliness, facade regularity and interface image improvement, without touching the overall spatial pattern. ⁷¹ This means that laws and policies enter the block more through post-event governance and daily management in Wanxiu Village, rather than directly reshaping the spatial structure and form of the block through pre-planning conditions and construction permits.

4.1.3 The Direct Impact of the Governance Mechanism on the Street Interface



Figure 4-8.. Street-level view of market spillover and shared roadway use



Figure 4-7. Mobile vendor occupation and traffic interference along a residential street.



Figure 4-6. Illegal restaurant extensions and exposed waste-management infrastructure.

The above governance structure has an intuitive visual performance at the street interface level. First, due to the difficulty of the planning permission mechanism to cover high-frequency and micro-scale spatial changes in a timely manner, the use of building facades, ancillary structures and first floors largely depends on post-event management. Shop signs, awnings, plug-ins, additional stairs, and various temporary structures have become the main components of the interface, and their addition, subtraction, and adjustment often form a broad gray area between regulatory

70 Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Commission, Beijing shi “shisiwu” shi qi chengshi gengxin gui-hua [Beijing 14th Five-Year Plan for Urban Renewal] (2021).

71 Guangxi Civilization Network, “Nanning Wanxiu Village.”

prohibitions and daily needs (Figure 4-8.).

Second, in the creation of civilized cities or various special rectification actions, street interfaces are regarded as the most "visible" objects of governance performance. Measures such as floor improvement, store beautification, facade simplification, unified trash cans, and standardized parking can significantly improve visual order in a short period of time, but they are often difficult to reach the deep structures that lead to cluttered interfaces, such as high-density rental economy, insufficient public space, and lagging infrastructure. This dislocation of "movement rectification-structural problems unsolved" makes the street interface of Wanxiu Village present a typical cycle of "phased rectification-daily rebound" (Figure 4-6..

Third, grid governance strengthens the consultative management of street edge behavior. The spillover operation, stall placement and daily informal use of residents on the first floor of commerce are tolerated to a certain extent, and are included in the "manageable gray area" (Figure 4-7.) through grid staff inspections, verbal reminders and occasional centralized rectification. This practice maintains the convenience of life and economic vitality of the street in practice, but it also means that the interface order is highly dependent on the relationship between specific time periods, governance intensity and participants, and lacks a long-term order foundation through institutional stabilization.

4.1.4 The Institution-space Mechanism of Wanxiu Village

In general, the spatial form of the block in Wanxiu Village is not the result of the absence of law, but the product of the reinterpretation and implementation of planning and renewal regulations at the national and local levels, through the grassroots governance structure. The urban and rural planning, historical and cultural protection and urban renewal systems formulated by the state and local governments have set the principles and bottom lines for block renewal, such as "preventing large-scale demolition and construction", "retention, reform and demolition at the same time, and focusing on retention, utilization and improvement";⁷² However, in the context of urban villages, the main role of these systems is not reflected in the pre-planning control and construction permit links, but is "sunk" through grid governance, daily management and special rectification mechanisms, shaping the street interface in a more indirect way.

Under this system-governance combination, the block spatial form of Wanxiu Village presents three interrelated characteristics. The first is space compression. Multi-storey self-built houses are superimposed on limited land with high intensity,

⁷² Urban and Rural Planning Law (2019), arts. 4, 31; Shanghai Urban Renewal Regulations (2021).

forming a high-density and low-openness street and alley system, with limited ventilation and lighting conditions, further compression of fire passages and rescue spaces, and amplification of risks at a micro-scale. Similar high-density and strong compression characteristics have been identified as typical physical forms in many urban village studies.⁷³ The second is a high degree of functional mixing. Residence, catering, small commodity retail and various service industries are superimposed on the same interface, forming a continuously active street environment that lacks hierarchical differentiation. Commercial swinging, daily drying and motorized non-motor vehicle parking jointly occupy the street edge, so that the interface assumes the triple functions of traffic, transaction and life at the same time. The third is the formation of spontaneous order. In the process of long-term use, residents, landlords and operators constantly adjust boundaries and behavior patterns in a limited space, and gradually form a relatively stable tacit division of labor of "who can occupy which space at what time period", forming an informal but operational street order. This self-organization and consultative order is also regarded as an important institutional feature of urban villages in the process of rapid urbanization.

This order relies heavily on social consultation and governance tolerance, rather than institutionalized design control and stable rights arrangements. When the governance goals of the higher level government are changed, such as the increase in the assessment pressure for the creation of civilized cities or the launch of urban renewal projects, grid governance and special rectification can reshape the visible form of the street interface in a short period of time - unifying signboards, cleaning up the exterior, and demolishing temporary structures - but once the rectification movement slows down, the interface will partially rebound under the impetus of daily operation and living needs, showing the fragility of its institutional foundation.⁷⁴ In this sense, the impact of laws and policies on the spatial form of blocks in China's urban governance system shows significant "transmission differences". For spaces such as urban villages, the legal framework is more through the interface of grassroots governance mechanisms and movement rectification, rather than directly locking the form through pre-planning conditions and permitting procedures like planning new areas.

Therefore, the case of Wanxiu Village provides a key reference for subsequent comparative analysis: compared with the path of "directly regulating the interface through protection planning and style guidelines" in the historical district (three

73 Yuting Liu, Shenjing He, Fulong Wu, and Chris Webster, "Urban Villages under China's Rapid Urbanization: Unregulated Assets and Transitional Neighbourhoods," *Habitat International* 34, no. 2 (2010): 135–144, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0197397509000642>.

74 Yao Gao, "The Grid Process: Spatializing Local Governance in China" (PhD diss., University of Technology Sydney, 2021).

streets and two alleys) and the path of "pre-locking parameterized form through planning conditions and permitting system" in the new area (Wuxiang New District), Wanxiu Village highlights a system-space relationship dominated by the governance chain rather than the licensing chain. Based on this, the implementation-result-feedback framework proposed in Chapter 2 can be concretized as follows:

Implementation Chain: Legal → Planning → Licensing → Enforcement/Renewal → Day-to-day Management;

Interface results: facade material and continuity, street edge usage, attachment/encroachment form;

Subject feedback: Compliance, resistance, adaptive strategies and fairness perceptions of different groups (indigenous people, landlords, tenants, merchants and grassroots governance personnel).

4.2 Three Streets and Two Alleys: Over-Regulation and the Aesthetic of Order



Figure 4-9. Aerial view of San Jie Liang Xiang. Source: <https://gxxwfb.gxnews.com.cn/article.v2019.php?id=21607151>



Figure 4-10. Map of 3 Streets and 2 Alleys Source : Base map and satellite imagery from Amap

The “Three Streets and Two Alleys” (San Jie Liang Xiang) area—centered on Xingning Road, Minsheng Road, and Jiefang Road, together with the intersecting Jinshi and Yinshi lanes—is Nanning’s key historic urban quarter. Officially designated as a historic and cultural block with a protected area of about 18.66 hectares,⁷⁵ it concentrates a dense cluster of traditional shophouses, guildhalls, and temple compounds that once formed the commercial heart of old Nanning and now serve as a

75 People’s Daily Online (Guangxi), “Nanning jiaqiang ‘san jie liang xiang’ deng liu ge lishi wenhua jiequ baohu” [Nanning Strengthens Protection of Six Historic and Cultural Blocks Including ‘Three Streets and Two Alleys’], July 16, 2021, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://gx.people.com.cn/n2/2021/0716/c179430-34823398.html>.

major heritage landscape for the contemporary city.⁷⁶⁷⁷ Over the past decade the area has been comprehensively restored and repositioned as a culture-and-tourism precinct, operated as part of a wider “old Nanning” project and recognized as a national-level night-time culture and tourism consumption cluster as well as a national tourist leisure block.⁷⁸ This case therefore provides a strategic lens for examining how legal frameworks for heritage preservation are translated into design controls, operational rules, and everyday spatial practices.

4.2.1 Regulatory Baseline: From “Heritage Protection Principles” to “Auditable Interface Clauses”



Figure 4-11. Redevelopment preserves the original street network while regulating roof forms to maintain a coherent heritage streetscape. source: Base map and satellite imagery from Amap

Unlike the “rules arriving downstream” and ex post management that characterise urban-village cases such as Wanxiu, governance in historic districts is built around a different logic: regulations not only exist, but have clearly defined objects, boundaries, and durable implementation pathways. In the case of Three Streets and Two Alleys, this regulatory baseline can be summarised as three interlocking sets of institutional instruments.

The first set consists of higher-level heritage-protection norms, including the

76 Nanning Xingning District Government, “Nanning san jie liang xiang: liao jie chengwei wenlü ronghe xin dibiao” [Nanning’s Three Streets and Two Alleys: Old Lanes Become a New Landmark of Cultural–Tourism Integration], March 7, 2025, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.nnxd.gov.cn/sytpxw/t6290727.html>.

77 China Radio International (Guangxi), “Old Nanning · Three Streets and Two Alleys Historic and Cultural Block Revives the Flourishing Scene of a Century-Old Port” (in Chinese), October 23, 2023, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://gx.cri.cn/2023-10-23/8b0e749e-98e6-46ea-5415-1c45c86bb711.html>.

78 Standing Committee of the Nanning Municipal People’s Congress, Regulations of Nanning Municipality on the Protection of Historic and Cultural Blocks and Historic Buildings (in Chinese), adopted August 28, 2025, effective January 1, 2026, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://zjj.nanning.gov.cn/dtzc/tzgg/zhgl/t6505788.html>.

Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics and the Regulations on the Protection of Famous Historical and Cultural Cities, Towns and Villages.⁷⁹⁸⁰ These emphasise the need to preserve the authenticity, integrity, and continuity of historic patterns and spatial environments when protecting cultural heritage. At this level, the historic district is treated as a cultural artefact with intrinsic overall value: street widths, block grain, building profiles, and the proportions of traditional architectural elements together constitute the highest-level reference for the “desired state” of the interface. Any facade alteration or new construction is required not to compromise the basic sense of scale and continuity of the historic street space.

The second set is the localisation of these higher-level objectives through municipal legislation. The Regulations of Nanning Municipality on the Protection of Historic and Cultural Blocks and Historic Buildings, adopted by the Standing Committee of the Nanning Municipal People's Congress and approved by the Autonomous Region's legislature, entered into force on 1 January 2026. The regulations articulate principles of government leadership, public participation, scientific planning, strict protection, and rational utilisation, and codify “protection–use–supervision” into an enforceable system of responsibilities.⁸¹ For Three Streets and Two Alleys, their significance lies in transforming “streetscape” and “historic environmental elements” from vague value claims into hard variables within administrative procedures, thereby providing stable institutional anchor points and explicit legal bases for controlling the street interface.

The third set comprises specialised technical rules that target the street interface directly, namely the planning guidelines for outdoor advertising and shopfront signs. The Guidelines for the Planning and Placement of Outdoor Advertisements and Signboards in Nanning, adopted by the Nanning City Planning Committee and issued for implementation, specify prohibited zones, permitted conditions, dimensional and locational standards, and formal types for outdoor advertisements and signboards. These guidelines thus become an operational reference that can be directly invoked in planning conditions, permit approvals, and urban-management enforcement.⁸² Within a historic-district setting, signs are not a dispensable “add-on” but a core component of the interface information system: by

79 State Council, Regulations on Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities.

80 National People's Congress, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo wenwu baohufa* [Law of the PRC on the Protection of Cultural Relics] (amended 2017).

81 Nanning Municipal NPC, Regulations on Historic Blocks.

82 Nanning Municipal Urban Management Commission, “Guanyu yinfa ‘Nanning shi huwai guanggao he zhaopai shezhi guihua daoze’ de tongzhi” [Notice on Issuing the Guidelines for the Planning and Placement of Outdoor Advertisements and Signboards in Nanning], November 2, 2023.

regulating their position, size, colour, and material, the administration can substantially standardise the visual order of the street and provide a programmable vocabulary of facades to support the “Old Nanning” narrative and associated tourism-consumption scenarios.

Taken together, these instruments constitute a layered institutional structure: heritage-protection norms define the non-negotiable streetscape baseline; municipal regulations provide enforceable procedures and responsibilities; and technical documents such as the signboard guidelines supply auditable and enforceable interface parameters. This structure means that interface governance in Three Streets and Two Alleys is inherently pre-emptive and stable: the form of the street frontage is effectively locked in at the stages of project design and permit approval, while subsequent everyday management and commercial operation mainly involve fine-tuning within this institutional framework, rather than the ex post rectification and negotiated adjustment typical of urban villages

4.2.2 Implementation Chain: How Project and Operational Governance Translate Norms into Durable Order

Whether regulations are able to shape urban form depends less on the completeness of the written rules than on whether there is a continuous implementation chain with clearly mandated actors. In contrast to Wanxiu Village, where multiple departments intervene ex post through sporadic campaigns and routine enforcement, the defining feature of Three Streets and Two Alleys is that governance has been organised as a continuous chain of project-based construction, unified operational management, and the coupling of policy targets. Along this chain, abstract norms are gradually translated into visible and durable interface order.

First, project-based construction translates abstract norms into concrete spatial form. Official reports indicate that “Old Nanning · Three Streets and Two Alleys” was the first operational component of a “three-in-one” scheme that integrates Three Streets and Two Alleys, Zhongshan Road and Shuijie as a single historic-commercial precinct.⁸³ Under this project logic, facade restoration, street paving, public-space upgrading, shopfront renovation and circulation restructuring are not undertaken as scattered interventions, but are bundled into one or several integrated construction packages (Figure 4-12). Requirements concerning street pattern, materials, colours and architectural details drawn from heritage and streetscape controls are thereby translated at the level of construction drawings into specific design choices—such as

83 China News Service (Guangxi), “Guangxi Nanning ‘ye jingji’ xin kuan chuangzao chenjinshi ye youchangjing” [Guangxi Nanning’s New ‘Night-time Economy’ Creates Immersive Night-tour Scenes], October 19, 2023, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.gx.chinanews.com.cn/ly/2023-10-19/detail-ihcuctns6146679.shtml>.

stone paving modules, parapet and eaves heights, and the continuity of facade articulation—producing a highly continuous built interface. In this way, “streetscape control” ceases to be a declaratory principle and becomes embedded in an engineered set of material and constructive solutions.

Second, unified operational management turns one-off restoration into an ongoing regime of interface regulation. Unlike many historic districts where comprehensive renovation is followed by fragmented management, Three Streets and Two Alleys has been placed under the unified management and operation of a designated urban operation company owned or authorised by the municipality.⁸⁴ In public statements, such entities are described as being responsible not only for property maintenance, fire safety and basic order (Figure 4-19.), but also for tenant



Figure 4-12. Highly continuous street interface produced through bundled construction packages in Three Streets and Two Alleys.



Figure 4-13. Operational management as a second-layer regulator of shopfronts, signage, and street activities

recruitment, functional mix, event programming and visitor-flow management. In practice, this “operational actor” becomes a second-layer regulator of the interface: shopfront sign types, lighting schemes, the extent and layout of outdoor seating, temporary stalls and festival installations are governed through operating rules (Figure 4-13.), lease contracts and performance evaluations. Interface control thus does not end at practical completion or formal acceptance; it is continuously maintained and fine-tuned through everyday operational decisions, forming an “operational mode of regulation” that sits between planning control and ordinary urban-management enforcement.

84 China.com (Nanning Channel), “Liu zhu ‘lao Nanning wei’: San jie liang xiang he Zhongshan lu” [Keeping the ‘Old Nanning Flavour’: Three Streets and Two Alleys and Zhongshan Road], March 30, 2023, accessed January 1, 2026, https://www.nanning.china.com.cn/2023-03/30/content_42313873.htm.



Figure 4-14. Streetscape in Three Streets and Two Alleys functioning as a curated setting for city branding and cultural–tourism performance.



Figure 4-16. Continuous paving, coordinated facades and regulated outdoor commercial activities along the main pedestrian street



Figure 4-15. Peripheral building adjacent to the regulated commercial area, showing partial assimilation of heritage-oriented facade control and ongoing everyday use.

Third, the coupling of policy targets provides incentives and constraints for maintaining order over time. Since being designated as a National Night-time Culture and Tourism Consumption Agglomeration Area and a National Tourist Leisure Block, Three Streets and Two Alleys has come to function not merely as a site of local governance, but as a showcase for the city’s image and cultural–tourism performance.⁸⁵ Within these policy frameworks, indicators such as night-time landscape effects, walkability and experiential quality, commercial vibrancy and safety are explicitly monitored. Interface governance therefore ceases to be a matter of simple regulatory compliance and becomes structurally bound up with objectives of city branding, tourist consumption and investment attraction (Figure 4-14.). Clean and continuous paving, coordinated facades, controlled outdoor business and stall layouts (Figure 4-18.), and carefully choreographed night-time lighting become necessary conditions for achieving these performance goals (Figure 4-16., Figure 4-17.). The coupling between policy branding, market expectations and operational strategies, in turn, strengthens both the motivation and the resource base of operators and authorities to sustain interface order over time.

85 Guangxi News Network, “Yongzhou gu cheng · San jie liang xiang tansuo gu Yongzhou meili” [Yongzhou Ancient City · Three Streets and Two Alleys Explores the Charm of Ancient Yongzhou], September 17, 2025, accessed January 1, 2026, https://www.nxnews.net/yc/jrww/202509/t20250917_1316265.html.

Taken together, these three moments show that the implementation chain in Three Streets and Two Alleys takes the form of a combined structure of “engineering-based shaping, operation-based maintenance and policy-driven incentives.” Higher-level norms are compressed into materials, constructions and spatial forms through project-based construction; they are translated into everyday management rules through unified operation; and they are incorporated into performance-evaluation systems through the coupling of policy targets. Compared with urban villages where spatial order depends heavily on grid-based governance and campaign-style clean-ups, this chain makes the interface order of Three Streets and Two Alleys more preemptive, predictable and durable, and provides the institutional foundation for the



Figure 4-19. Everyday operational regulation of street-edge activities, where outdoor seating and displays are permitted but spatially



Figure 4-18. Formalised street-edge activity in Three Streets and Two Alleys, illustrating the institutional translation of everyday commerce into regulated display.



Figure 4-17. Pedestrian-oriented historic streetscape where everyday commerce is reorganised into a unified display under heritage-oriented regulation.

“over-regulation and aesthetic of order” that the following subsections analyse in spatial terms.

4.2.3 Street-Interface Outcomes: Uniformity, Continuity and a “Showcase” Ground Floor

Under the regulatory framework and the engineering–operation–policy chain outlined above, the street interfaces of Three Streets and Two Alleys display a result structure markedly different from that of Wanxiu Village.

4.2.3.1 *Enhanced facade continuity and material consistency*

Block-based restoration and facadism controls standardise street-wall height, setbacks, and the permitted architectural vocabulary. Compared with Wanxiu Village,

the interface is more continuous; most interruptions occur at corners and key nodes. Facade materials and colours are compressed into a limited palette of blue–grey brick, grey tiles and fair-faced walls, in line with the project’s “repair the old as old, build the new as old” principle.⁸⁶ This degree of uniformity is not the product of “organic growth,” but of normative requirements being translated, through engineering practice, into choices of materials, details and construction methods.

4.2.3.2 Highly regulated signboard system and lower information density

Under Nanning’s Guidelines for the Planning and Placement of Outdoor Advertisements and Signboards, shop signs converge in position, scale and format; the number and layering of signs per unit frontage is reduced, and visual noise is significantly lowered.⁸⁷ Interface information shifts from competitive projection to ordered presentation. This improves the legibility of the street and strengthens the coherence of the historic narrative. At the same time narrowing the scope for individual businesses to differentiate themselves through their facades.

4.2.3.3 Showcase-oriented ground-floor and organised activities

At ground level openings exhibits a stable pattern of openings and commercial displays, with transparent shop windows and orderly display fronts aligned along the main visitor routes, forming a “showcase” frontage oriented towards tourists. Everyday spill-over uses are compressed or channeled into internal courtyards, back alleys and designated activity spaces. Outdoor business is transformed from spontaneous expansion into a behaviour permitted only at specified segments, times and scales and managed through operating rules and lease conditions. Against the background of policies promoting the night-time economy, the ground-floor interface primarily serves strolling and consumption paths rather than the day-to-day convenience of nearby residents.

4.2.3.4 Higher predictability of spatial order

Unlike the oscillatory pattern of “campaign–rebound–readjustment” observed in Wanxiu Village, interface order in Three Streets and Two Alleys is temporally stable and predictable. The continuous chain of approval, construction and operation sharply narrows the “rebound space” for temporary structures, uncontrolled outdoor business and informal attachments, keeping fluctuations within a narrow band allowed by the rules. This high predictability reduces governance and safety risks, but

86 “Lao Nanning · San jie liang xiang lishi wenhua jiequ zhengshi kaiman” [Old Nanning · Three Streets and Two Alleys Historic and Cultural Block Officially Opens], Nanning ribao [Nanning Daily], December 24, 2018, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.ngzb.com.cn/news/32646.html>.

87 Nanning Municipal Urban Management Commission, “Notice on Guidelines for Outdoor Advertisements” (2023).

also diminishes spatial contingency and openness, providing interface-level evidence for the subsequent discussion of over-regulation and the aesthetic of order.

4.2.4 Mechanism explanation: The Institutional Production Logic of Aesthetic Order

Taken together, the case of Three Streets and Two Alleys reveals how an “aestheticised order” is institutionally produced in historic districts along a strong institutional path within the “law–governance–form” transmission model developed in Chapter 3. Higher-level heritage-protection norms and municipal regulations provide clear objectives, procedures and responsibilities, while Nanning’s signboard guidelines translate streetscape control into auditable parameters; project-based restoration and a unified operating company ensure continuity along the implementation chain, so that the street interface is repeatedly materialised as a uniform, continuous, legible and tightly controlled form.⁸⁸ In this process, the interface is no longer simply the outcome of design preference but becomes a visible projection of institutional goals: as governance objectives shift from minimal safety and sanitation towards facade control and cultural-tourism performance, the strength and durability of interface regulation increase, generating spatial tensions between enhanced display value and the compression of everyday uses and spontaneous flexibility.

Different user groups experience this “aestheticised order” in divergent ways: visitors tend to value order, atmosphere and legibility and thus respond positively to unified facades and curated night-time experiences; shopkeepers weigh increased and stabilised footfall against higher compliance costs and reduced operational flexibility; residents and other long-term users are more concerned with everyday convenience, noise and crowding, and with whether “authenticity” is being replaced by a consumable narrative, often expressing a certain distance from the staged character of the space. In comparison with Wanxiu Village, where interface outcomes are shaped by grid-based governance and negotiated order, and with Wuxiang New District, where parametrically defined planning conditions underpin a different regime of control, Three Streets and Two Alleys represents the historic-district endpoint of this comparative triangle: a strong-institution path in which norms are technicised and proceduralised, embedded in engineering and operation, and thereby stabilise highly consistent interfaces while risking the over-locking of everyday life and authenticity into a display-oriented landscape.

⁸⁸ Nanning Municipal Urban Management Commission, “Notice on Guidelines for Outdoor Advertisements” (2023).

This positional diagnosis provides a direct foundation for Chapter 5, which argues that design guidelines and management frameworks in historic districts should not pursue formal uniformity alone, but must jointly account for everyday life, situated authenticity and operational performance in order to avoid a one-sided drift towards purely aestheticised, consumption-oriented facades.⁸⁹

4.3 Wuxiang New District: High-Modernist Order and Everyday Contradictions

Wuxiang New District, located on the south bank of the Yongjiang River opposite Nanning's old city, is a flagship expansion zone developed over the past two decades. Planned as the city's new administrative and financial centre, it is characterised by broad boulevards, superblocks, high-rise clusters and iconic civic landmarks. In contrast to Wanxiu Village's incremental growth and Three Streets and Two Alleys' heritage-led renewal, Wuxiang represents a paradigmatic "planned new town," where statutory planning, land-leasing and project-based development have produced a large-scale, highly standardised urban interface within a relatively short period of time.

In this thesis, this condition is understood through the lens of "high modernism," which refers to a planning rationality characterised by strong confidence in expert knowledge, large-scale spatial ordering, functional clarity, and the capacity of formal rules to organise urban space from above.⁹⁰ Following James C. Scott, the term is used here to describe a governance logic that privileges legibility, technical control, and administratively ordered spatial form.⁹¹ In Wuxiang, this logic is visible in the pre-structured regulation of plots, setbacks, frontage, and visual image through statutory planning, land leasing, and project approval. Its paradox lies in the fact that such a system produces a highly legible and visually ordered interface, while often weakening pedestrian granularity, everyday adaptability, and the social thickness of the street.⁹² This section therefore examines how planning regulations and urban

89 Xinhua News Agency, "Ye jingji 2.0 rang 'zhixu gan' rongru 'yanhuo qi'" [Night-Time Economy 2.0: Let a 'Sense of Order' Blend into the 'Flavour of Everyday Life'], April 24, 2025. Accessed January 1, 2026.
<https://www.news.cn/fortune/20250424/6388f3b3fbc24621a2d03498cb9efe21/c.html>

90 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

91 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

92 Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961); Jan Gehl, *Cities for People*

design guidelines have shaped that interface, and how different users experience both the promises and the contradictions of this high-modernist environment.

4.3.1 Legal and Policy Instrument Chain: Pre-emptive Constraints from Land to Interface

The spatial form of Wuxiang New District is progressively “pre-locked” by a



Figure 4-20. Area of Wuxiang New District covering approximately 168 km². Source: Base map and satellite imagery from Amap

(Washington, DC: Island Press, 2010).

traceable chain of legal and policy instruments. From land supply to development permits, and from technical guidelines to digital supervision, each layer constrains the way in which the street interface can be produced at different scales.

4.3.1.1 Land regime and development boundary: state-owned construction land as the starting constraint

In contemporary China, the construction of new urban districts typically begins with the acquisition and allocation of state-owned construction land. The Land Administration Law of the People's Republic of China stipulates that construction projects requiring state-owned construction land must obtain land-use rights through compensated means such as land transfer, with only limited exceptions for allocation.⁹³ As a result, most urban development activities are channelled into a continuous institutional chain of “land acquisition – project approval – construction implementation.”

Within this framework, the marketisation and contractualisation of urban land-use rights are widely regarded as key institutional preconditions for the formation of an urban land market: land-use rights can be traded through transfer and other mechanisms, while the state strengthens its capacity to monitor and control land redevelopment through planning and permitting regimes.⁹⁴ For Wuxiang New District, this means that block form is effectively pre-set at the moment a project is initiated—through parameters such as plot size, land-use designation and development intensity—and subsequently refined during the permitting stage into conditions directly related to the configuration of the street interface.

4.3.1.2 Statutory Planning and Administrative Licensing: Turning the Street Interface into an Object of Enforcement

The Urban and Rural Planning Law of the People's Republic of China establishes a sequence of planning permits—location opinion, construction land planning permit and construction project planning permit—and confirms approved plans as the legal basis for construction and management, specifying the legal consequences of building without a permit or in violation of a permit.⁹⁵ In Wuxiang New District, this implies that street space is no longer merely a matter of “public-space design,” but becomes a target of the permitting system. Setbacks, the openness of ground floors, the continuity of street facades and the reservation of advertising positions can all be written into planning conditions, thereby transforming them into

93 Zhonghua renmin gongheguo tudi guanlifa [Land Administration Law of the People's Republic of China] (2019 revision), art.

94 Kremzner, “Managing Urban Land in China,” 699.

95 Xueqin Zhang, “Urban Land Reform in China,” *Land Use Policy* 14, no. 1 (1997): 29–43.

clauses that can be inspected, enforced and, if necessary, rectified.

4.3.1.3 *Guidelines Governance: A Digital Loop from Rules to Implementation*

Wuxiang New District has introduced a dedicated system of urban form and colour guidelines. The Technical Guidelines for Urban Form and Colour Control in Wuxiang New District, Nanning, Guangxi (2025) set out requirements for buildings, municipal facilities and landscape elements from the two perspectives of form and colour, with the stated aim of creating an urban image that is “spacious and orderly, modern and fashionable, diverse and inclusive.”⁹⁶ Crucially, these guidelines do not remain at the level of policy advocacy; they are embedded in project approvals. Planning design condition letters issued by Nanning’s natural-resources authorities already include clauses such as “the street-facing building interface of the project shall comply with the requirements of the Technical Guidelines,” turning guideline provisions into verifiable standards of compliance.⁹⁷

This institutional assemblage—comprising statutory plans as hard constraints, planning conditions as auditable clauses and technical guidelines as quantifiable specifications—directly converts the street interface from a matter of design expression into a matter of regulatory compliance, and sets the stage for the “high-modernist paradox” discussed later in this chapter.

4.3.2 **Grass-roots Governance Structure: How the “Delegation–Co-ordination–Execution” Chain Shapes the Interface in Wuxiang**

Governance in Wuxiang New District is not carried out by a single administrative tier but operates through a chain of “delegated authority, co-ordinated steering and territorial execution.” In 2018, the Nanning Municipal People’s Government issued a decision formally entrusting the Wuxiang New District Planning and Construction Management Committee with the exercise of a series of administrative management powers and approval items related to planning, land use and construction management within the district, thereby providing the institutional foundation for Wuxiang’s governance.⁹⁸ This arrangement facilitates “alignment”

96 “Nanning shi Wuxiang xinqi chengshi biaotai yu baise kongzhi jishu daoze zhengshi fabu shishi” [Technical Guidelines for Urban Form and Colour Control in Wuxiang New District, Nanning, Officially Issued and Implemented], Guangxi guangbo dianshitai [Guangxi Radio and Television Network], March 6, 2025, accessed January 1, 2026, https://news.gxtn.cn/article/detail_c8a758d79a3e4e16a21d0436d756ccec.html.

97 Nanning Municipal Bureau of Natural Resources, “Jianshe xiangmu guihua sheji tiaojian tongzhi” (Shenpi hao: (Wuxiang Ziran) 2025-0035)” [Planning Design Conditions Notice for a Construction Project (Approval No. (Wuxiang Natural) 2025-0035)], 2025, accessed October 14, 2025, <https://xxtq.gov.cn/xxgk/xxgkml/ggzypzlygk/gytshyqykyqcrly/crgg/P020251027585410564082.pdf>.

98 Nanning Municipal People’s Government, “Nanning shi renmin zhengfu guanyu weituo Guangxi Nanning Wuxiang xinqi

across the stages of investment promotion, project initiation, plan implementation and urban management: the management committee co-ordinates overall objectives for industrial layout, construction pace and spatial image, while specialised departments such as natural resources, housing and urban–rural development, and urban management translate these objectives into planning conditions and enforcement checklists (Figure 4-21.).

At the implementation level, urban management (including comprehensive law enforcement) has a particularly direct impact on the street interface. According to published lists of powers and responsibilities and notices on special campaigns, the core duties of urban management departments include investigating and handling unlawful structures built without planning permission, rectifying disorder in city appearance and occupation of public space, and clearing, demolishing or rectifying outdoor advertisements and shopfront signs installed without approval.⁹⁹ When these enforcement functions are combined with the new district’s ambition to project a curated image, the street interface becomes highly “controllable”: attached elements on facades are compressed, signs and advertisements become more uniform, and street vendors and outdoor business activities are channelled into designated time–space windows or licensed areas.

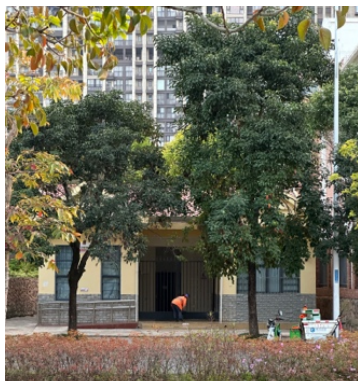


Figure 4-22. Community sanitation facilities as part of routine, maintenance-oriented governance of public space



Figure 4-21. A substation integrated into the streetscape through planning control and image-oriented design.

At the same time, grass-roots governance in Wuxiang exhibits a typical pattern of institutional path dependence. Studies of China’s urban community governance have shown that the system has been evolving from the work-unit and street/resident-

guihua jianshe guanli wei yuan hui xingshi bufen xingzheng guanliquan de jue ding” [Decision on Entrusting the Wuxiang New District Management Committee with Certain Administrative Powers], November 30, 2018

99 Nanning Municipal Urban Management Bureau, “Nanning shi chengshi guanliju guanyu kaizhan huwai guanggao qingli zhengzhi gongzuo de tonggao” [Notice on Carrying Out the Clean-up and Rectification of Outdoor Advertisements], April 11, 2024, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.siglff.com/xinwenzixun/ggyx/65571.html>.

committee models towards a community-based regime (Figure 4-21.), but that this transformation is deeply shaped by historical legacies and by the state’s interest in maintaining control over local society.¹⁰⁰ Party-building leadership, organisational mobilisation and the embedding of multiple functions at community level enhance the capacity for organised governance, yet also reinforce the continuity of existing management frameworks. In Wuxiang New District, such organisational capacity is readily mobilised to maintain cleanliness, order and recognisability, thereby amplifying, in everyday management, the structuring effects of plans, guidelines and planning conditions on the street interface.

4.3.3 Spatial Form and Interface Outcomes: Visible Features of High Modernism

4.3.3.1 Block scale and street network: large plots and arterial roads producing a car-oriented interface



Figure 4-24. (left) Primary arterial corridor in Wuxiang New District. Source: <https://www.news.cn/photo/20240923/214a604e17ba478f9f09930073ec684f/c.html?page=7>

Figure 4-23. (right) Transit-oriented street interface around a metro station in Wuxiang New District.

The “superblock plus wide arterial roads” model that characterises many Chinese new towns has been widely criticised for undermining walkability and street life. The *Jinan Urban Form and Travel Behavior Study*’s “Create Human-Scale Streets and Small Blocks” principle uses China’s tradition of 400-metre superblocks as a key example, arguing that large blocks and wide roads tend to generate networks dominated by arterials, increase automobile dependence and reduce pedestrian connectivity.¹⁰¹ Empirical studies of the transition “from superblock to small block” similarly link superblocks to car dependence and poor walkability, and show that

¹⁰⁰ Cheng, “From ‘Closed System’ to ‘Open System’,” 119.

¹⁰¹ World Bank, *Ending Global Sprawl: Urban Design for a Compact, Walkable City* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2023), Principle 6, “Create Human-Scale Streets and Small Blocks,” accessed January 1, 2026. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099050124115211048/pdf/P156504199ce9f09b1893415fa45090ea63.pdf>

finer-grain grids can significantly improve accessibility and network efficiency.¹⁰²

The organisation of roads and plots in Wuxiang New District largely follows



Figure 4-27. Night-time informal street vending temporarily transforming a planned street into a village-like, spillover-driven interface.



Figure 4-28. Daytime condition of fixed night-market structures occupying public green space: formally regulated and orderly, yet inactive and spatially inefficient outside designated operating hours.



Figure 4-25. Ground-floor frontage dominated by enclosed commercial forms in Wuxiang New District, contrasting with fine-grained and permeable street edges in urban villages and historic districts.



Figure 4-26. Institutionalised setbacks and landscaped forecourts shaped by planning conditions in Wuxiang New District.

this paradigm. The *Nanning Urban Master Plan (2011–2020)* designates Pinglu Avenue, Wuxiang Avenue and other routes as primary arterial roads forming the north–south and east–west spines of the new district, while the Headquarters Base area is described as unfolding from a central park on Wuxiang Avenue in a combined fan-shaped and orthogonal grid, with clearly defined boundaries and sub-districts.¹⁰³ Under a development logic that prioritises “land parcel leasing, road construction,

102 Zhigao Wang, Liang Li, and Yinghao Li, “From Superblock to Small Block: Urban Form Transformation and Its Road Network Impacts in Chenggong, China,” *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change* 20, no. 5 (2015), accessed January 1, 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11027-014-9614-z>.

103 Guangxi Government Service Network, “Wuxiang zongbu jidi” [Wuxiang Headquarters Base], September 20, 2024, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://gbdsj.gxzf.gov.cn/jingcaizhuanti/pzgx/pscj/nns/t19011078.shtml>.

project-based, large-scale development,” street interfaces are thus predisposed to serve vehicular movement (Figure 4-24.) (Figure 4-25.) (Figure 4-26.), rather than being structured around fine-grain networks that support everyday walking, street-side lingering and small-scale street economies (Figure 4-23.).

4.3.3.2 Street-facing Facades and Ground Floors: From Design Choice to Planning Condition

In Wuxiang, ground-floor street interfaces are to a large extent pre-specified as objects of regulation through the combination of planning conditions and design guidelines. Planning design condition letters issued by Nanning’s natural-resources authorities already require that “the street-facing building interface of the project shall comply with the Technical Guidelines for Urban Form and Colour Control in Wuxiang New District, Nanning, Guangxi, and that gaps between adjacent buildings shall be avoided,” thereby writing requirements for continuity, volumetric transition and colour control directly into approval documents.¹⁰⁴

This configuration of conditions tends to generate two observable outcomes. First, setbacks and forecourt spaces are institutionalized: relatively deep strips of landscaping, slow-traffic space or forecourts emerge between building lines and the street red line (Figure 4-26.), producing neat but large-scale interfaces. Second, ground-floor functions become conservative: frontages are more likely to contain lobbies, enclosed commercial complexes or other “controllable openings,” while the density of small, permeable street shops remains low, weakening continuous pedestrian attraction and daily street life (Figure 4-25.).

104 “Planning Design Conditions Notice (No. 2024-0035).”; Nanning Municipal Urban Management and Law Enforcement Commission, “Guanyu yinfa ‘Nanning shi huwai guanggao he zhaopai shezhi guihua daoze’ de tongzhi” [Notice on Issuing the Planning Guidelines for Outdoor Advertisements and Shop Signs in Nanning], November 2, 2023. Accessed January 1, 2026.
URL: https://szy1.nanning.gov.cn/xxgk_5612/zfwj/P020250210659651539445.pdf

4.3.3.3 Outdoor Advertisements and Shop Signs: Achieving Visual Order Through Guidelines and Ordinances



Figure 4-30. Large-scale outdoor advertisement integrated into the architectural structure along a primary arterial road in Wuxiang New District, designed for long-distance visibility and city-image presentation.



Figure 4-29. Standardised residential facade signage with highly saturated backgrounds in Wuxiang New District, illustrating the advertising-like visual effect produced at the implementation level

At the municipal level, Nanning has developed a relatively comprehensive regulatory system for outdoor advertisements and shop signs. The *Planning Guidelines for the Placement of Outdoor Advertisements and Shop Signs in Nanning* were adopted by the Municipal Urban Planning Committee and issued as an official policy document, providing differentiated planning bases and technical parameters for advertisement and sign placement in different parts of the city.¹⁰⁵ Complementary regulations such as the *Nanning Outdoor Advertisement Installation Management Regulations* stipulate that outdoor advertising facilities must conform to urban planning and cityscape standards and be licensed by the urban-management authority.

When this regulatory system is coupled with Wuxiang’s own form-and-colour guidelines and project-specific planning conditions, the visual outcome at the street interface becomes highly standardised: the size, position and materials of signs are tightly controlled, attached elements on facades are reduced, and visual noise is significantly lowered. The resulting image of the new district is thus “recognisable and replicable,” although this visual order also narrows the expressive space of individual businesses and the diversity of the streetscape. However, implementation outcomes reveal a tension between formal visual order and perceptual quality, as highly saturated background colours tend to dominate the streetscape and generate an advertising-like appearance at larger viewing distances (Figure 4-30.) (Figure 4-29.).

105 Nanning shi huwai guanggao shezhi guanli tiaoli [Nanning Outdoor Advertisement Installation Management Regulations] (2012 revision), arts. 1–2, 12–22, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.nnxcn.gov.cn/xxgk/zcwj/fggz/t2529919.html>.

4.3.4 Mechanism Explanation and Summary of this Section: The Closed Loop of "system-form-interface"

The evidence from Wuxiang New District can be summarised as a top-down, closed loop of institutional transmission that corresponds point by point to the “law–governance–form” framework developed in Chapters 2 and 3.

4.3.4.1 Land and Statutory Planning Define Structural Boundaries

The acquisition of state-owned construction land and statutory instruments such as the *Nanning Urban Master Plan (2011–2020)* channel development into a parcel-based, project-based trajectory. Large plots, wide arterial roads and a hierarchy of main corridors are pre-specified, so that block scale and network hierarchy are effectively fixed before individual projects are conceived.

4.3.4.2 Permits and Planning Conditions Convert the Interface into Regulatory Clauses

Within the sequence of location opinions and planning permits for land use and construction, setbacks, massing, ground-floor openness and facade continuity along the street are written into planning design condition letters. Matters that would otherwise be treated as design choices thus become auditable conditions of compliance.

4.3.4.3 Technical guidelines and special ordinances institutionalise image objectives

Urban form and colour guidelines, together with guidelines for outdoor advertisements and shop signs, decompose abstract goals such as “orderly, modern and neat” into concrete parameters, while companion ordinances give these parameters binding force. The scope for individual discretion is significantly reduced in exchange for high consistency of scale, colour and information density at the interface.

4.3.4.4 District-level co-ordination and urban-management/community enforcement maintain visible order

The Wuxiang management committee integrates image objectives into investment promotion and project approval, whereas urban-management agencies and local communities use routine inspections and special campaigns to clear illegal structures, encroachments and unlicensed advertisements. Interface order is thereby maintained not as a one-off campaign outcome but as a form of normalised management.

4.3.4.5 The Spatial Outcome Exhibits a Tension Between High Order and Low Everydayness

Under this chain of constraints, Wuxiang's street interfaces appear continuous, regular and visually quiet. Yet within a structure dominated by superblocks and arterial roads, fine-grain networks, small shops and permeable ground floors are scarce; pedestrian permeability and street life remain weak, echoing empirical critiques of superblocks and their negative impacts on walkability.

4.4 Comparative Summary: The Difference in Spatial Conduction of Legal Framework and the Order of Three Types of Street Interfaces

4.4.1 Institutional Gradient Model: Three "Governance Interface-interface results" Paths Under the Same Legal Framework

The three field points in this chapter (Wanxiu Village, Three Streets and Two Lanes, and Wuxiang New Area) constitute a comparable "institutional strength gradient". The difference lies not in the existence of laws and policies, but in the governance interface through which laws/policies enter the spatial production process and at what stage they form sustainable form constraints. In order to ensure a closed loop with Chapter 2 "Legal Framework" and Chapter 3 "Interface Indicators - Field Approach", this study abstracts the transmission process of legal influence interface into four links: (1) normative clarity (whether rules can be clarified and parameterized); (2) Pre-locking strength (whether it is embedded in the land use - planning conditions - permit review - acceptance chain); (3) Execution continuity (whether the continuous execution of approval, engineering, and operation is formed); (4) Ex post adjustment method (mainly relying on daily consultation, sports rectification or operational regulation).

Under this model, the three sample areas correspond to three types of typical paths: (1) Wanxiu Village embodies the "consultative order dominated by post-event governance": the norm exists but the pre-lock is weak, and the interface is mainly adjusted by grassroots governance around the bottom line goals such as public security, fire protection, sanitation, and rental house management, forming a consultative order characterized by flexibility and temporality. (2) Three streets and two lanes reflect the "aesthetic order of continuous execution of approval-project-operation": heritage protection and cityscape/signboard rules are technologically logicalized and enter the approval and project delivery. (3) Wuxiang New Area embodies the

"parametric order of strong pre-locking of the licensing chain": rules such as style/color and signboard are embedded in the licensing link in the form of guidelines and planning conditions, which can lock the consistency of the form with high intensity, but the constraints on the use performance (first layer vitality, walking continuity, and stay comfort) are relatively insufficient, resulting in the weak coupling of "form compliance - insufficient use".

Therefore, the core conclusion of this chapter is that the influence of legal frameworks on urban interfaces has significant "transmission differences". When the institutional interface is biased towards bottom-line governance, the interface vitality is strong but the order fluctuates. When the system interface is biased towards operation regulation, the interface is stable but easy to be staged. When the system interface is biased towards permission locking, the interface is clean and consistent, but it is easy to have shortcomings in street life.

In summary, these areas respectively reveal three paths for legal frameworks to shape urban interfaces through different governance interfaces: consultative order, aesthetic order and parametric order. The three jointly prove that the formation of urban interface is not a single spatial design problem, but the coupling result between institutional tools, governance organization and daily use. Based on the above comparison, this study proposes typological interface guidelines and governance strategies in Chapter 5 to further transform the spatial effects of legal frameworks from "visible order" to "usable order".

5 Typological Classification, Scope of Application, and the Normative Positioning and Methodological Basis of the Guidelines

Chapter 4 examined three representative spatial contexts—Wanxiu Village, Three Streets and Two Alleys, and Wuxiang New District—to reconstruct the transmission chain of *law–governance–form* and to identify how street interfaces are produced under distinct institutional conditions. In the urban-village case, national and local regulations tend to be implemented selectively through grassroots governance and campaign-style rectification, resulting in a negotiated order in everyday space.¹⁰⁷ In the historic-district case, heritage protection principles and operational governance are layered, translating “character” and “authentic city” into a highly stabilized aesthetic order.¹⁰⁸ In the planned new-town case, land and statutory planning front-load the locking-in of block structure, while technical guidelines and administrative ordinances further refine form control—yet this tends to generate a paradox of high order but weak everyday life at the street interface.¹⁰⁹

On this basis, Chapter 5 translates the diagnostic findings of Chapter 4 into a set of context-sensitive urban design and governance guidelines. These guidelines respond directly to the central research question posed at the outset of this dissertation: how, in a local urban context, legal and governance systems can guide street interfaces to meet requirements of safety and order while still accommodating everyday practices and cultural expression.

The analytical foundation of Chapter 4 integrates on-site observations, systematic photographic documentation and coding, as well as close readings of planning instruments and policy documents. Through cross-case comparison, recurrent interface-related problems and institutional mechanisms were identified. The guidelines developed in this chapter take these “typical situations” as their point of departure and adopt a “context–problem–recommendation” structure, translating abstract institutional mechanisms into clauses that can be incorporated into planning conditions, design briefs, operational contracts, and grassroots governance rules.

107 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

108 Sharon Zukin, *The Cultures of Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995).

109 Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

5.1 Guideline Framework and Normative Language

To maintain operational flexibility, the guidelines employ a tiered normative language *shall / should / may* in specific clauses. “Shall” denotes baseline requirements that must be satisfied; “should” indicates recommended optimization directions where conditions allow; and “may” refers to flexible arrangements that can be explored under appropriate circumstances or through negotiation. Rather than prescribing precise numerical indicators, the guidelines emphasize spatial relationships, relative priorities, and qualitative judgments that can be recognized and assessed by professional practitioners.

Based on the typology of institutional and governance conditions summarized in Chapter 4, the guidelines are organized into three categories:

5.1.1.1 *Urban Village Type (represented by Wanxiu Village)*

This type is characterized by weak land tenure clarity and limited planning control, high spatial density, and intense functional mixing. Legal regulation is primarily implemented *ex post* through grid-based governance, routine management, and targeted enforcement campaigns, producing a negotiated order in which rules exist but are unevenly applied.¹¹⁰

5.1.1.2 *Historic District Type (represented by Three Streets and Two Alleys)*

Under the combined influence of heritage protection regulations, local ordinances, and unified operational management, the street interface becomes a concentrated carrier of aestheticized and tourist-oriented order. While interface uniformity and display value are enhanced, everyday practices and local modes of expression are often compressed.¹¹¹¹¹²

5.1.1.3 *Planned New Town Type (represented by Wuxiang New District)*

Starting from state-owned land conveyance and statutory planning, block structure and interface parameters are pre-emptively fixed through planning conditions, technical guidelines, and administrative ordinances. This produces highly consistent and reproducible institutionalized interfaces, while simultaneously

110 Cheng, “From ‘Closed System’ to ‘Open System’,” 119.

111 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006).

112 Ning Wang and Michael Rowlands, “Heritage, Tourism, and Identity in Urban China,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26, no. 3 (2020): 219–235.

exposing deficiencies in walkability and everyday street life.¹¹³¹¹⁴

These three types are broadly representative of contemporary Chinese cities, where urban villages, historic districts, and newly planned areas with differing governance regimes frequently coexist. Grounded in empirical evidence from Nanning, the guidelines proposed in this chapter are intended to serve as adaptable references for similar spatial types.

5.1.2 Interface Evaluation Framework and Evidentiary Basis: Core Interface Dimensions

To ensure comparability across the three guideline sets, this section adopts the interface evaluation framework established in Chapter 4 and treats the street interface not as a collection of isolated visual features, but as an integrated system operating across spatial, functional, informational, operational, and governance dimensions. The purpose of the framework is twofold. First, it provides a consistent analytical structure through which interface conditions in different urban contexts can be compared. Second, it translates case-based observations into evaluative criteria that can later support scenario-based design and governance recommendations.

The framework is organized around six interrelated dimensions. They move from the more structural and morphological aspects of the interface, through its functional and visual articulation, to its occupation, use, and visible regulation in everyday space. In this sense, the framework explains not only what the interface looks like, but also how it works as a socio-spatial and governance-sensitive condition (Figure 5-1.).

1. *Streetwall continuity and block grain.* This dimension concerns the structural framework of the interface. It includes building-to-line ratio, continuous streetwall length, and the fineness of block subdivision, which together shape pedestrian enclosure and network permeability.¹¹⁵ These factors shape enclosure, rhythm, and spatial coherence at the street level, and therefore determine whether the interface reads as continuous, fragmented, fine-grained, or oversized. As the morphological base of the interface, this dimension provides the spatial order within which the other dimensions operate.
2. *Active frontage and ground-floor transparency.* If street wall continuity establishes the spatial frame, active frontage determines whether that frame becomes

113 World Bank, *Ending Global Sprawl*, Principle 6.

114 Xuefei Ren, *Urban China* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 45.

115 Reid Ewing and Susan L. Handy, "Measuring the Unmeasurable: Urban Design Qualities Related to Walkability," *Journal of Urban Design* 14, no. 1 (2009): 65–84, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13574800802451155>.

socially operative. This is reflected in opening frequency, storefront/window/door configurations, visibility, and permeability—key indicators for whether everyday life becomes legible in the public realm.¹¹⁶ It captures the extent to which the interface supports interaction, visibility, and pedestrian engagement, rather than functioning as a closed or passive edge.

3. *Information density and the signage system.* Beyond physical form and openness, the street interface also functions as a communicative surface. The placement, form, and quantity of signs structure interface legibility, visual order, and the expressive space available to local commerce.¹¹⁷ It evaluates how information is organized and expressed along the street, and whether the signage system reinforces legibility and local commercial identity or produces visual clutter and discontinuity.
4. *Edge use and spillover occupation.* The interface often extends beyond the formal façade line through everyday occupation of the street edge. This captures the overlap of people–vehicles–goods at the street edge, including spillover vending, temporary structures, and routine storage.¹¹⁸ It captures the degree to which the interface remains strictly bounded or becomes operationally expanded through use. This is especially important in contexts where negotiation, informal adaptation, or selective enforcement shape how the street edge is actually lived.
5. *Staying spaces and nodes.* Street interfaces are not only linear surfaces; they also generate points of pause, congregation, and orientation. The density of micro-staying points—arcades, covered edges, corners, and small plazas—indicates whether a street supports social presence and everyday cohabitation.¹¹⁹ It therefore evaluates whether the interface merely supports movement or also produces places of temporary occupation and social intensity.

116 Gehl, *Cities for People*, 191.

117 Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1960).

118 William H. Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington, DC: The Conservation Foundation, 1980).

119 Project for Public Spaces, “What Makes a Successful Place?,” accessed January 5, 2026,

<https://www.pps.org/article/grplacefeat>.

6. *Governance traces and visible regulation.* Finally, the interface is also read through the material traces of governance. Signage, notices, rectification traces, and facility placement materialize how law and policy become visually embedded in the interface itself.¹²⁰ This dimension is crucial in the present study because it reveals how governance becomes spatially visible at the street edge.

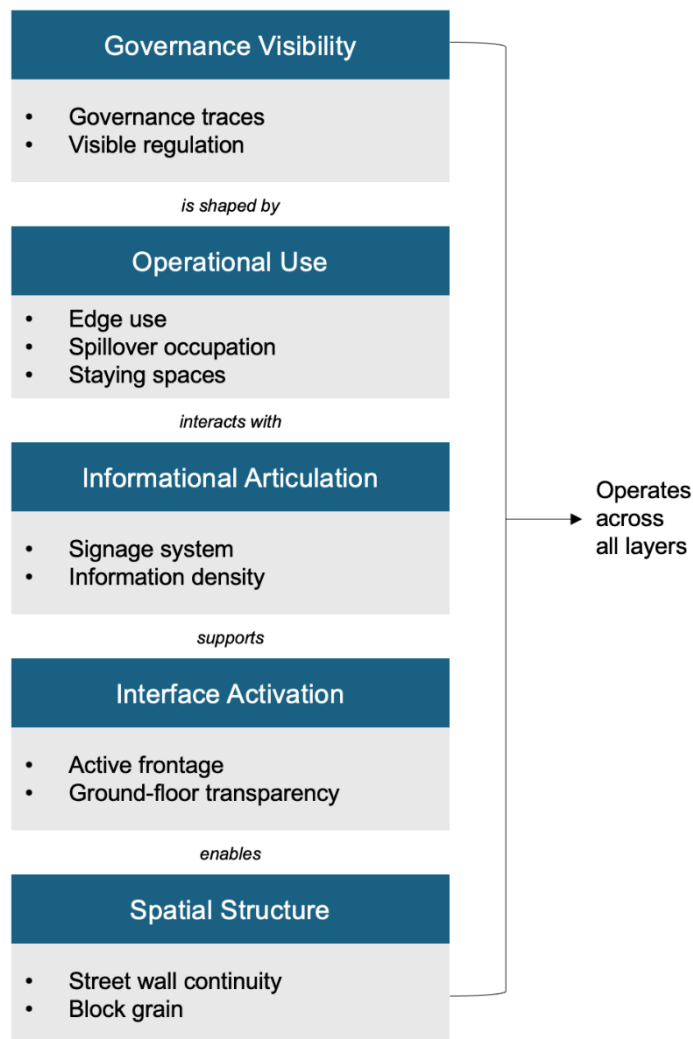


Figure 5-1. A Layered Analytical Framework Linking Chapter 4 Diagnosis and Chapter 5

Overall, These six dimensions move from the structural ordering of the interface, to its activation and communication, and finally to its occupation and governance. They therefore allow the street interface to be evaluated as a layered urban condition in which spatial form, everyday use, and institutional control intersect.

5.1.3 Organization of Evidence

This study emphasizes *mechanism-oriented interpretation and context-*

¹²⁰ Ewing and Handy, "Measuring the Unmeasurable," 65.

sensitive judgment. Specifically, the guidelines in this chapter are developed through the following evidentiary organization:

First, representative street segments and nodes across the three cases were systematically photographed, following a unified naming convention and fieldwork protocol.

Second, the photographs were coded against the interface dimensions above, enabling the identification of recurring interface configurations within local governance contexts (e.g., “bottleneck alley, spillover vending, fire-safety risk,” “unified refurbishment, new attachments,” “large forecourt, closed ground floor”).

Third, these configurations were matched to planning texts, policy tools, and grassroots governance practices to reconstruct the transmission pathways linking *law/policy* → *governance actions* → *interface outcomes*.

Fourth, based on these typical situations, the chapter formulates guidelines as scenario-based decision prompts, rather than attempting to derive universal thresholds through statistical testing. In other words, each recommendation in this chapter can be traced back to a corresponding spatial scene in the plates and field records presented in Chapter 4; the function of the guidelines is to provide a reusable decision framework for analogous situations.

5.1.4 Baseline Principles for Cultural Diversity and Cultural

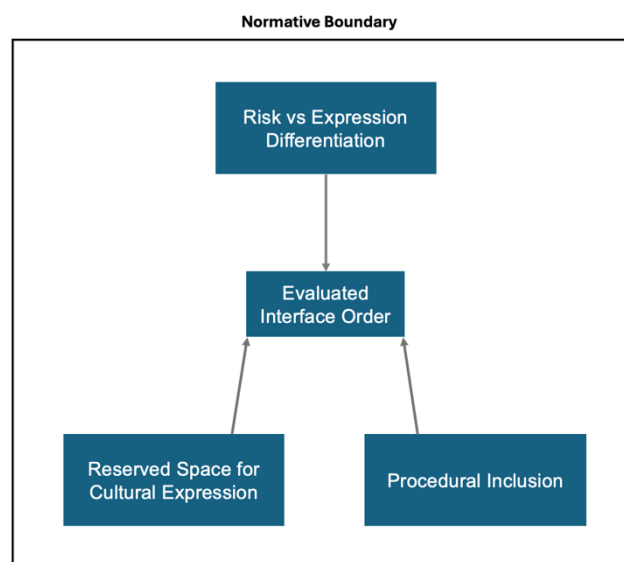


Figure 5-2. Parallel Normative Principles for Evaluating Street Interface Order

Expression

Although the six evaluative dimensions provide a common framework for comparison, their application is guided by baseline principles concerning cultural diversity and cultural expression. As the capital of the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous

Region, Nanning's street interfaces are not only projections of legal regulation and governance practice; they are also surfaces for diversity of everyday practices and cultural expression. Accordingly, beyond the typological differentiation, this chapter proposes three cross-type principles for cultural diversity cities. In this figure (Figure 5-2.), safety and baseline order are treated as a baseline constraint within which the three principles jointly filter the evaluation of interface order.:

First, under the premise of safety and baseline order, non-standardized interface elements should not be indiscriminately classified as "disorder." Instead, governance should differentiate risk from cultural expression: behaviors implicating fire safety, structural safety, and public health should be strictly constrained, while 'street-facing expressions of minority languages, dress, foodways, and decorative practices should be treated as legitimate components of street diversity.¹²¹

Second, within form-control regimes in historic districts and new towns, a limited yet clearly defined interface space should be reserved for local and minority cultural symbols, so that extreme uniformity in materials, colors, and signage does not flatten cultural plurality into a neutralized metropolitan image.¹²²

Third, when drafting and adjusting specific clauses, interviews, hearings, or issue-based consultations should be used to incorporate voices from different ethnic groups of operators and users, so that interface governance is not merely an exhibition project "for whom to view," but a public process "by whom to participate."¹²³

Finally, the framework assumes that cultural expression is not only a matter of visual symbolism, but also of procedural inclusion. When design clauses or interface guidelines are formulated, the perspectives of different operators, users, and community groups should be considered, so that regulation does not suppress difference by default. In this sense, cultural diversity is treated here not as an optional decorative layer, but as a basic evaluative principle for judging whether street-interface order remains socially and contextually meaningful.

121 Leonie Sandercock, *Cosmopolis II: Mongrel Cities of the 21st Century* (London: Continuum, 2003).

122 Iris Marion Young, "The Ideal of Community and the Politics of Difference," *Social Theory and Practice* 12, no. 1 (1986): 1–26, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://philpapers.org/rec/YOUTIO-6>.

123 Project for Public Spaces, "What Makes a Successful Place?"

5.2 Guidelines for the Urban Village Type: Baselines and Flexibility under a Negotiated Order

5.2.1.1 Typical Situations and Problem Diagnosis

The urban-village type represented by Wanxiu Village is characterized by high-density self-built housing, highly mixed ground-floor uses, and concentrated populations of mobile tenants. Chapter 4 demonstrates that such spaces are not defined by an absence of law; rather, they operate under an institutional condition best described as weak *ex ante* planning control—strong routine management—intermittent rectification campaigns.¹²⁴ Construction accumulates largely outside the strict planning-permit sequence, while risk control and interface “neatness” are compensated *ex post* through grid-based governance, civilized-city campaigns, and safety-oriented special operations.¹²⁵ As a result, interface form becomes highly adaptive to rental economies and small-scale livelihoods while remaining under persistent governance pressure related to fire safety, public order, and sanitation.

Typical situations include: in narrow alleys, spillover vending, parking of motor vehicles and e-bikes, temporary storage, and fire-access requirements overlap; on facades subjected to unified repainting and rectification, a new round of attachments quickly “regrows”; and the alternation between nighttime enforcement and everyday rebound produces an interface rhythm that is staged, negotiated, and temporally uneven.

5.2.1.2 Governance Mechanism Guidelines

For the urban-village type, whether guidelines can be implemented depends substantially on the organizational capacity of the grassroots governance network. Based on Wanxiu Village, this study distills three governance guidelines:

First, establish a coordination mechanism linking *subdistrict office—community/village committee—grid workers—urban management/fire services*, and incorporate bottleneck alleys, key nodes, and high-risk interfaces into joint inspection and negotiation lists, avoid relying on episodic campaign-style actions by a single department.¹²⁶

124 Anselm L. Strauss, *Negotiations: Varieties, Contexts, Processes, and Social Order* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978).

125 Beijing Normal University Research Center for Social Governance, “Wanggehua zhili yu jiceng shehui zhili: Bianhua, wenti yu jianyi” [Grid-Based Governance and Grassroots Social Governance: Changes, Problems, and Recommendations], accessed January 2, 2026, <https://shzl.bnu.edu.cn/docs/2025-03/6ae457a1d17549819efb56e1b57c91f3.pdf>.

126 Beijing Normal University, “Grid-Based Governance.”

Second, institutionalize negotiation through community councils or merchant-representative meetings, bringing sensitive issues—such as spillover rules, waste disposal routines, and night-time operating hours—into predictable deliberative procedures; replace “negotiation after punishment” with “negotiation before enforcement,” reserving flexible space for livelihoods and cultural practice without crossing safety baselines.¹²⁷

Third, use simple and feasible registers together with periodic public disclosure to publish risk status and adjustment outcomes for key points, enhancing transparency and traceability of responsibility so that the guidelines can gradually be internalized as a routine tool of grassroots governance.¹²⁸

5.3 Historical District Guidelines: Rebalancing Aesthetic

Order and Everyday Nature

5.3.1 Objectives and Scope of Application

This section takes the historical and cultural blocks of three streets and two alleys as the experience anchor and puts forward the interface design and governance guidelines for the types of historical districts. Its fundamental goal is not to simply replicate the existing "clean, orderly and unified" visual effects of the three streets and two lanes, but to establish a balance mechanism that can be replicated and adjusted between heritage protection, cultural tourism operation and residents' daily life: on the one hand, through the clear identification and protection of the bottom line of style elements, the historical district is avoided by arbitrary demolition or pseudo-ancient buildings under market pressure; On the other hand, through the detailed guidelines of opposites, signboards, public spaces and daily use, a certain amount of life and cultural expression space is reserved for residents and local operators, and the interface governance is avoided from slipping to a single "staged landscape".

Therefore, the Guidelines of this section are applicable to the following types of spatial situations: first, the old city area has been designated as a historical and cultural block or historical style area through legal procedures, and has a clear protection planning and management agency; second, traditional streets and alleys that have both cultural heritage value and active commercial functions, and have shown a tendency to develop cultural tourism; Third, we are promoting centralized renewal projects in the name of "repairing the old as the old" and "improving the

127 Young, "The Ideal of Community," 1–26.

128 Beijing Normal University, "Grid-Based Governance."

style". For the old city areas that have not yet completed the protection identification or take large-scale demolition and construction as the main path, this section can be used as a reference for the discussion of the previous style identification and renewal strategy, but it is difficult to directly translate it into hard control clauses in the short term.

5.3.2 Style Elements and Protection Bottom Line

Rather than simply listing the general requirements of "no change in building height and no demolition of historical buildings", it is more important to identify and maintain the "character-defining elements" that make up the overall character of the neighborhood.¹²⁹ For the three streets and two alleys, these elements include not only the street and alley pattern in the material dimension, the relationship between the arcade space and the building volume, but also the rhythm of the storefront, the transparency of the first floor and the semi-outdoor communication space under the arcade, which is closely related to the commercial tradition of the old city.¹³⁰ Without a clear definition of these elements, it is easy to transform the block into an antique street that lacks locality in the name of "neatness and unity".

Combined with the morphological analysis and field observation in Chapter 4, the three streets and two lanes contain at least the following types of style elements that should be prioritized for identification and protection:

1. Street pattern and spatial skeleton: The street system with Xingning Road, Minsheng Road, and Jiefang Road as the main axis, together with small-scale lanes such as Golden Lion Lane and Silver Lion Lane, constitutes the hierarchical structure of "main street-side alley-back street". The bottom line of protection is to maintain the basic direction, width level and accessibility relationship of streets and alleys, and not arbitrarily widen, open up or close traditional lanes on the grounds of vehicle demand.

2. Arcade and continuous street wall: The two sides of the street are connected by arcade corridors to form a continuous street wall, and the space under the corridor assumes the functions of daily traffic and stay in the rainy season and high temperature environment. The bottom line of protection is to maintain the continuity and passability of the arcade corridor, and it is forbidden to destroy the sense of continuity of the street wall by closing the corridor, retreating as a whole or changing the volume of the isolated volume.

3. Building height to street width ratio: Traditional 2-3 storey paved buildings and

¹²⁹ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), *The Venice Charter: International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (Venice, 1964).

¹³⁰ Jukka Jokilehto, *A History of Architectural Conservation* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 1999).

medium street widths together form a moderate "street valley" scale, ensuring that pedestrians can see both the sky and the continuous facade when they look up. The bottom line of protection is to control the damage of new or additional volumes to existing height systems, and avoid the sudden insertion of high-rise towers or over-raised doors in continuous low-rise interfaces.

4. Store rhythm and first-layer transparency: Closely aligned store openings, high first-floor transparency and "mutually visible inside and outside" window display are the basis of the commercial vitality of the old city. The bottom line of protection is to prevent the entire lobby and curtain wall from replacing the fine-grained rhythm of the storefront, and avoid the formation of a long-distance "no event" interface.

5. Materials, colors and detailed components: traditional plastered walls, masonry details, wooden doors and windows and metal railings constitute the material genealogy of three streets and two lanes. The bottom line of protection lies in controlling highly reflective materials, large areas of glass, and color schemes that clearly conflict with the historical atmosphere, and trying to preserve or restore key details during renovations.

6. Traces of street life and cultural expression: small-scale outings, sitting and resting at the door, stalls at the alley entrance and festival decorations constitute the "living" expression of the block. The bottom line of protection is not to eliminate such daily behaviors, but to guide their orderly existence through rules under the premise of safety and passage, so that the historic district is not completely staged as an "empty shell landscape".

5.3.3 Storefront & Signage Guidelines

Intent The purpose: This guide is to reserve the necessary recognition and cultural expression space for individual shops on the premise of maintaining the overall style and visual order of the historical district of three streets and two lanes, and avoid completely simplifying the street interface to a neutral display background under the goal of "unified and continuous" interface, so as to compress the visibility of local business and multiculturalism.¹³¹

The interface analysis in Chapter 4 shows that after unified rectification, the street facades of the three streets and two lanes have achieved a high degree of consistency in material, color and setback, the continuity of the street wall has been significantly improved, and the visual noise has been significantly reduced. However, the signboard system is highly standardized under strict guidelines, and the cantilevered, vertical or local-style signboards are greatly compressed, and the first-layer interface

131 Zukin, *Cultures of Cities*.

has shifted to a display use centered on tourists' shopping and consumption. The presence of residents' daily use and local cultural symbols in the interface is weakened, and the spillover of life is mostly diverted or moved backward, forming a state of strong "aesthetic order" and weak "daily expression".

5.3.3.1 *Guidelines: Facade and Shopfront Openings*

Shall: The new or renovated storefront should not destroy the existing facade partition relationship,¹³² and should not be plastered with the opening rhythm through overall closure, complete glass box or large-area opening. The transparent part of the first floor should be mainly concentrated within the height of the traditional storefront, avoiding the continuous curtain wall that extends to the entire floor height to preserve the visibility of historical components such as facade pedestals and colonnades.

Should: On the premise of meeting fire protection and barrier-free, it is encouraged to maintain a certain frequency of independent door openings and window combinations, so that pedestrians can recognize the rhythm of the store at the street scale, rather than being "slid over" by a single large-volume interface. Encourage the use of window displays and interior lighting to create a nighttime perspective effect, reinforcing the visual response of the first floor to pedestrians, rather than relying solely on uniform light strips and floodlighting.¹³³

May: For old stores with high historical value or business traditions, some incomplete doors and windows can be retained without damaging the structure and safety, and recognized through the case review mechanism.

5.3.3.2 *Signage and Information System:*

Shall: The location of the fixed signboard should be limited to the lintel or window wall on the first floor, and key components such as cornices, colonnades, and gables should not be obscured. The height and thickness of the signboard should be controlled within the maximum range specified in the style guidelines.¹³⁴ Avoid using large highlighted LED screens, rolling captions, or bright ads that clearly conflict with the overall atmosphere of the historic district.

Should: The material and color of the signboard should be selected in the unified color spectrum and material library, giving priority to matte and non-reflective materials (such as wood, metal, matt paint, etc.), and forming a moderate contrast with the main color of the building facade rather than a strong conflict. Encourage the

¹³² Allan B. Jacobs, *Great Streets* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993)

¹³³ Gehl, *Cities for People*.

¹³⁴ UNESCO, *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*, Paris, 2011, paras. 18–21.

appropriate introduction of local dialects, ethnic minority scripts or patterns as secondary characters or graphic elements without affecting basic readability, and strengthen the local and multicultural identity of the neighborhood.¹³⁵

May: During traditional festivals or approved theme activities, temporary decorative signs (such as lanterns, flags, banners) are allowed, but they should be removed within a time limit after the event to prevent temporary components from occupying the interface for a long time. For cultural or non-chain merchants with demonstration significance, "special case design" can be allowed within a certain range on the basis of expert demonstration, and the details of the block interface can be enriched through the case approval mode.

5.3.3.3 *Ground-Floor Display and Everyday Use*

Shall: The layout of the first floor swing and display facilities shall not block the basic passage function of the arcade corridor or roadway, and at least one side of the continuous passage belt shall be retained.¹³⁶

Should: Implement a "dual-use" design for street-facing node spaces (squares, street corners, arcade corners): during the day, they can be used for residents' stays, street performances or community activities, and at night they are combined with cultural tourism operations for moderate display and market activities.¹³⁷

May: The "flexible swing system" of some street sections is piloted: a certain intensity of display and commercial spillover is allowed during peak tourism periods, and the space is shrunk to residents' priority use on weekdays or specific periods, and the tension between display and daily life is adjusted through time management.

5.3.4 **Guidelines for Public Spaces and Everyday Use**

5.3.4.1 *Arcades and Colonnades*

Intention: On the premise of maintaining the arcade as a continuous rainproof corridor and the skeleton of historical space, it not only serves tourists, but also continues to accommodate residents' traffic and small-scale social activities, so as to avoid the arcade corridor being completely "rented" as a display window or catering space.

Current problems: In some sections of the three streets and two lanes, the arcade corridors have been uniformly paved and lit, but the external facilities, advertising displays and guidance signs occupy a large proportion, and residents often

¹³⁵ Young, "The Ideal of Community," 3.

¹³⁶ Gehl, *Cities for People*.

¹³⁷ Margaret Crawford, John Chase, and John Kaliski, eds., *Everyday Urbanism* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1999).

need to detour for passage and short-term stays. Some nodes even have corridors surrounded by catering into "semi-boxes", weakening the essential attributes of the arcade as a continuous public corridor.

5.3.4.2 *Guideline Terms:*

Shall: maintain a continuous clearance belt on at least one side along the arcade corridor, and shall not block the passage by fixing the swing facilities, closing the fence or raising the steps; In case of emergency, the arcade should be able to be used as an evacuation path.

May: control the swing of the arcade on the side against the wall, mainly movable and foldable facilities, to avoid the formation of non-adjustable hard occupation; The swing density should be differentiated between peak business and weekdays.

Should: In some road sections that are used by residents a lot, pilot the establishment of "resident priority periods" (such as prohibiting or restricting large-scale outings during the daytime on weekdays), and adjust between display operations and daily life through time management.

5.3.5 **Guidelines for Governance and Operation Mechanisms**

The guidelines for historic district types must be embedded in the daily workflows of local governments, professional institutions, and operators. Combined with the governance practice of three streets and two lanes, this section puts forward the following guidelines for governance and operation mechanisms.

First, at the level of institutional division of labor, it is recommended that the municipal or district-level cultural relics/historical and cultural block authorities take the lead in formulating and revising the guidelines and aligning them with protection plans and local regulations. The sub-district office and community are responsible for daily communication and on-site coordination; The operating company assumes specific implementation and daily maintenance responsibilities, and takes the guidelines as one of the hard constraints in investment promotion, brand selection and event planning.¹³⁸ Second, in the approval and operation chain, the guidelines should be moved forward and solidified into procedural links: for applications involving facade renovation, new signboards or exterior facilities, design descriptions comparing with the guidelines must be submitted, and a small joint review team composed of planning, cultural protection, urban management and operators must be submitted, and a small joint review team composed of planning, cultural protection,

¹³⁸ State Council, Regulations on Protection of Historical and Cultural Cities.

urban management and operators must be checked; For existing facilities that violate the guidelines, it is advisable to deal with them in the form of "negotiation and rectification first, and then administrative punishment" to avoid sudden "aphasia" in block space caused by one-size-fits-all law enforcement.¹³⁹ Third, in terms of participation and feedback mechanisms, residents, merchants and tourists should collect their feelings about interface changes through regular symposiums, questionnaires or digital platforms, especially on issues such as the compression of daily space and the marginalization of diversity cultural expression, and use them as an important basis for fine-tuning guidelines and operational strategy adjustments. Through such a feedback loop, the historic district guide is no longer a one-way control tool, but becomes an institutional carrier for continuous negotiation between protection goals, market pressures and daily life.

5.3.5.1 Applicability and Limitations

The guidelines for the interface of historical districts proposed in this section are based on three streets and two lanes as the main empirical basis, and their applicability first depends on a number of prerequisites: first, the relevant cities have completed the legal delineation and protection planning of historical districts, and provide clear institutional support for the guidelines; second, there are relatively stable operating entities willing to assume part of the public responsibility in addition to the income, and regard the guidelines as part of long-term asset maintenance; Third, the grassroots governance network can connect with cultural protection, urban management and operating institutions, and carry out necessary consultation and coordination work in daily management. When these three conditions are basically met, the guidelines can act as an intermediary between the conservation plan and the operation contract, translating the abstract landscape objectives into specific requirements that can be implemented at the interface level.

At the same time, this set of guidelines also faces obvious limitations. For old city areas that have not yet completed statutory recognition and are in the stage of large-scale demolition and construction or radical tourism development, the guidelines are easily overwhelmed by stronger capital and administrative logic, and the form control may be achieved directly through reconstruction rather than repair. In addition, in some historical districts, residents have moved out on a large scale, and the permanent population is highly mobile, and the participation of residents and the daily expression of urban context emphasized in this section also need to be redefined

139 International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China (2015).

according to the actual population structure.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, this section guidelines are more suitable as a "progressive tool" for cities with certain governance capabilities and willingness to protect history: through continuous small-scale adjustment and feedback mechanisms, we can avoid the simplification of historical districts in the path of aesthetics and consumption, rather than trying to solve all contradictions in a one-time transformation.

5.4 Typical Scenarios and Problem Diagnosis Wuxiang

New Area

5.4.1 New District Guidelines: From High Modernism to "Usable Interface" Correction

The distinctive feature of the planned new city type represented by Wuxiang New Area is that the spatial form is deeply embedded in the tool chain of land system and statutory planning from the beginning. Starting from the transfer of state-owned construction land, the statutory master plan and the control detailed plan lock in advance the boundaries of the plots, road levels and land use functions.¹⁴¹ The planning permission and planning and design conditions of construction projects will be clause into requirements such as retreat, volume, and first-floor interface; The technical guidelines for style and color control, outdoor advertising and signage settings further refine materials, colors and information systems. Different from the "rule backward" of Wanxiu Village and the "multi-departmental superposition and control" of three streets and two lanes, Wuxiang New Area embodies a highly advanced "high modernist" governance logic.

The spatial empirical evidence in Chapter 4 shows that in areas such as the headquarters base, this logic produces distinct and contradictory results at the level of street interfaces. On the one hand, the structure of super blocks and main roads gives priority to the main road, so that the backbone roads such as Pingle Avenue and Wuxiang Avenue are geometrically clear, the plot boundaries are regular, the building volume is orderly, and the interface presents a highly consistent, replicable and easily recognizable urban image at the macro level. The style guidelines and advertising guidelines further reduce visual noise through the standardization of materials and

¹⁴⁰ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, chap. 3.

¹⁴¹ People's Republic of China, *Land Administration Law of the People's Republic of China* (Beijing: National People's Congress, amended 2019).

signs.¹⁴² On the other hand, from the perspective of pedestrian scale and daily use, the wide car dealership section, large-scale front yard, and closed or lobby-based first-floor interface together constitute a "good-looking but not easy to use" street: the opening spacing on the first floor that can be accessed is too large, and the continuous "no-event interface" is widespread, and small commercial and spontaneous activities are difficult to attach to the main street interface, and can only be transferred to the inner street or commercial complex.

Therefore, the typical problem of Wuxiang New Area is not "lack of order", but "too strong order but object shift": legal and planning tools highly effectively control the consistency of form and image neatness, but to a large extent ignore the need of interface as a carrier of daily life, resulting in obvious lack of usability, accessibility and cultural expression space of street interface.¹⁴³

5.4.2 Block Scale and Street Network Guidelines

The purpose of this guide is to correct the vehicle scale interface caused by "super large blocks and main road priority" in planned new cities such as Wuxiang New Area, and to reserve reasonable space for walking, daily stay and street economy by refining the road network and adjusting the block scale without weakening the overall traffic function and image goals, so that the street interface can be shifted from a single display interface to a "usable interface".¹⁴⁴

On the premise of not weakening the traffic capacity and overall structural stability of the main road, the vehicle scale logic of "super large blocks and main roads first" in the Wuxiang New Area is corrected, and basic conditions for walking, street stays and small-scale interface activities are created by refining the block division and supplementing the secondary road network.

The road and plot organization of Wuxiang New Area is highly dependent on the main road and large-scale development units: Pingle Avenue, Wuxiang Avenue, etc. constitute the backbone channel, and the plot is mostly provided in the form of a whole commercial or residential group, with few internal branch roads, and the cross-section is dominated by multi-lane motor lanes, wide front yards and high-rise pedestals. From the perspective of pedestrians, the opening of the first floor that can be accessed along the street is relatively spaced, and the continuous "event-free

142 Nanning Municipal Government, *Technical Guidelines for Urban Form and Colour Control in Wuxiang New District* (Nanning: Nanning Natural Resources Bureau, 2025).

143 Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), chap. 7.

144 K. Burrowes, *From Streets to Citizen Spaces: How Superblock Models Rebalance Street Use Toward People* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2019), 2–3

interface" leads to insufficient daily pedestrian attraction, making it difficult for small commercial and spontaneous activities on the street to grow naturally at the main interface. The focus of interface governance is also biased towards traffic order and green space maintenance.

At present, a large number of plots of land in Wuxiang New Area are provided in the form of entire commercial or residential groups, with sparse internal branch roads, and priority is given to motor vehicle traffic and image display on the cross-section of the main road. When pedestrians walk along the main street, they often need to cross long distances of green belts, parking lots and large frontyards to access the accessible interface, and there is a lack of small-scale street rhythm and microspace along the street. The streets are thus structurally clear and experientially poor.

5.4.2.1 Guideline: Block Size and Secondary Network

Shall: In the new round of detailed control planning and land transfer conditions, the "maximum block scale" control requirements are put forward for the new development area: development units exceeding a certain side length should be decomposed into several small blocks that can be passed through new urban branch roads or public open passages. In adjacent rail stations, bus hubs and public facilities concentration areas, it is necessary to ensure that the walking path from the exit of the station to the surrounding streets is not blocked by continuous large plots and closed front yards, and at least one corridor or internal street and alley open to the public should be set up.

Should: Priority should be given to the use of non-separating belts and wide green belts in the red lines of existing planned roads, and transform them into branch roads or side pedestrian branches with slow travel functions, so that pedestrians do not have to rely entirely on motor vehicle trunk roads to complete travel. For the formed large blocks, the "internal short circuit" can be supplemented and the walking distance can be shortened by opening the inner street, passing through the overhead floor on the ground floor or sharing the atrium.¹⁴⁵

May: Pilot the demonstration section of "narrow street and narrow road network" in specific areas, test the feasibility of human-scale streets in Gaomi New City with a smaller road width and a more continuous interface, and then promote it according to the results.

145 Michael Southworth, "Designing the Walkable City," *Journal of Urban Planning and Development* 131, no. 4 (2005): 246–

5.4.2.2 *Arterial Cross-Section and Pedestrian Space*

Shall: Under the premise of meeting the basic traffic capacity, continuous sidewalks should be ensured on both sides of the main road, and a clear "separation of people and vehicles" interface should be formed through tree arrays, light poles, guardrails and other facilities to avoid pedestrian space being encroached upon by motor vehicle parking or large green isolation belts.¹⁴⁶

When building or renovating roads, sufficient pedestrian space should be reserved for pedestrians to walk in parallel, push strollers or wheelchairs smoothly, rather than only "formally existing sidewalks" as the lower design limit.

Should: By reducing the overly wide central green belt or the excessive lane of vehicular traffic, part of the road width is returned to sidewalks, non-motorized lanes or small squares facing the street to increase interface stops and microspaces.

In high-traffic places such as bus stops and intersection nodes, set up setback spaces or small-scale squares to avoid crowds from being completely squeezed into narrow sections of the sidewalk.

May: For holidays or specific activity periods, speed limits or temporary "car concession" management can be implemented on some road sections, combined with street activities, markets, etc., to guide citizens to reoccupy part of the street space and test the possibility of higher humanistic priority.¹⁴⁷

5.4.2.3 *Interface Continuity and Edge Accessibility*

Shall: The first floor interface of buildings along the street should not be completely isolated from the sidewalk by continuous walls, enclosed green spaces or height difference steps. For plots that really need to be closed in terrain or function, a continuous pedestrian corridor or commercial interface along the street should be provided within the red line.

Should: In the interface of the first floor of administrative, cultural and commercial buildings, the functions open to the public (such as coffee, small exhibition halls, service windows) are appropriately arranged to reduce the appearance of "whole section of closed pedestals" and improve the permeability and recognition of the interface.

May: For buildings that have been completed but have too closed interfaces, we will tentatively improve streetside accessibility and staying possibilities by adding openings, partially opening up or configuring temporary lightweight facilities (such as

¹⁴⁶ NACTO, *Urban Street Design Guide* (New York: National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2013).

¹⁴⁷ Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), *Pedestrian Safety and Urban Space Management* (New York: ITDP, 2018).

pop-up stores, mobile stalls, etc.).¹⁴⁸

5.4.3 First-level interface and functional hybrid guidelines

5.4.3.1 Ground-Floor Interface and Functional Mix

This module aims to correct the tendency of the first floor interface to be overly "lobby-oriented and enclosed", and to improve the opening frequency, transparency and functional mix of the first floor along the street under the premise of ensuring safety and controllable management, so that the main street interface of Wuxiang New Area can be accessed, stayed and consumed from a one-way image display to a daily use space that can be entered, stayed and consumed.

Existing issues Next to many main roads in Wuxiang New Area, the first floor is often designed as a high-ceiling lobby, closed podium or continuous green space and steps, with a limited number of openings along the street, and the entrances are concentrated in a few car dealership drop-off points or atrium entrances. Small commercial and service facilities are mostly located on the inner street or the commercial street in the building, which is disconnected from the interface of the main street. This layout improves the integrity and image of the building, but weakens the sense of life and convenience at the street level, making the first floor interface largely a "distant" urban background.

5.4.3.2 Guidelines

Shall: In the planning conditions of new construction or renovation projects, it is clear that the minimum number of units accessible to the first floor or the maximum length of the continuous closed interface along the side of the main street (e.g., the continuous closed section should not exceed a few meters), and implement it in the design review. A certain proportion of open space (such as exhibition halls, service windows, coffee corners) should be allocated along the street side of the main public buildings (administrative, cultural, sports, etc.) on the first floor, and shall not be completely closed by inaccessible glass curtain walls or physical enclosures.

Should: Encourage the arrangement of small-scale, independently accessible business or service units, such as convenience stores, small cafes, community service points, etc., along the first floor, to form a more delicate door opening rhythm. For large-scale commercial complexes, the internal business and the street should be connected by "turning out" part of the inner street to the red line side and opening an outward-facing entrance, rather than being completely inward-oriented.

May: Try the "active interface quota" system in specific road sections, such as

148 Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia, *Tactical Urbanism* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2015).

requiring a certain proportion of interfaces along the first floor of new projects to be designed as convertible units, which can be adjusted from office or supporting space to open commercial or service functions according to later needs.

5.4.4 Front-field space and node activation guidelines

5.4.4.1 Forecourt and Node Activation

Intent to adjust the "large front court, monumental landscape" model that is common in Wuxiang New Area, so that the front yard of the building can be transformed from a simple visual landscape and traffic distribution space to a multi-functional node that can carry citizens' stays, small activities and community use, while avoiding the front yard being completely occupied by motor vehicles or closed greenery.

5.4.4.2 Existing issues

A large scale of hard or green forecourt is set up in front of the headquarters base and many surrounding public and commercial buildings to reflect the sense of place and dignified image. However, these spaces often lack available seating, shelter and activity facilities, and are strictly classified as "unstepable landscapes" or "pure traffic buffers", and even part of the front yard has been converted into surface parking lots. The result is that the interface is solemn and neat when viewed from a distance, but there is a lack of opportunities to stay and use it on a nearby scale.

5.4.4.3 Guidelines

*Shall: The front yard design of new projects should reserve clear walking paths and stopping areas under the premise of meeting the fire and traffic organization, and the front yard should not be designed as an inaccessible lawn, shrub belt or parking lot. In the front yard of important public buildings, basic public facilities such as reliable seating components, shading facilities and night lighting should be provided to support short stays and waiting.*¹⁴⁹

Should: In the front yard of public functions such as administrative, cultural, and sports buildings, encourage the design of flexible open spaces for markets, festivals, or community events, and preset the corresponding conditions (power interfaces, mobile device parking areas, etc.) in the pavement and infrastructure. In the front yard of commercial buildings, by reducing the height difference and reducing the combination of "steps, guardrails", the continuity between the front yard and the sidewalk is enhanced, so that the front yard becomes a natural extension of the

¹⁴⁹ UN-Habitat, *Global Public Space Toolkit* (Nairobi: UN-Habitat, 2015).

street space, rather than an isolated platform that is raised or set back.

May: Try the "shared front" model at some demonstration nodes, that is, through cooperation agreements, part of the frontcourt will be opened to the community at a specific time for bazaars, performances or ethnic minority festivals, and the management responsibilities and use boundaries will be clearly defined in the guidelines.¹⁵⁰

5.4.5 Governance Mechanism Guidelines: From "One-Time Design" to "Adjustable Rules"

Unlike urban villages that rely on consultative governance and historical districts that rely on protection institutions and operating entities, the core of the interface governance of planned new cities lies in how to transform the planning-design-construction process that was originally completed at one time into an "iterable rule system" that can accept feedback and adjust appropriately. This section emphasizes three directions.

First, the "use performance" of the interface is preceded as the evaluation dimension of planning conditions and design review. In the preparation of control detailed planning and project planning conditions, in addition to the traditional control of land use, plot ratio, building height and retreat control, qualitative requirements for the functional mixing, opening frequency and pedestrian accessibility of the first floor should be added, and the applicant should be required to explain it in the form of interface sketches, sections and pedestrian path analysis in the design review.

Second, embed the guidelines into the completion acceptance and post-evaluation mechanism. The completion acceptance should not only check whether the building is "constructed according to the drawings", but also check whether the interface is "used according to the guidelines": such as whether the first floor along the street is occupied by solid walls or inaccessible spaces, whether the front yard has been converted into a parking lot, and whether the reserved public passage is really open. For projects whose evaluation results do not meet the standards, feedback pressure can be formed through rectification within a time limit and stricter conditions for follow-up projects.

Third, establish a "fine-tuning mechanism" at the street scale. In new areas such as Wuxiang New Area, which are coordinated by the management committee, the interface coordination group can be jointly set up by the natural resources, housing and construction, urban management and street office, and regularly make small adjustments to the front-end facilities, swing rules and opening hours of specific

150 PPS, "What Makes a Successful Place?"

nodes based on feedback from residents and users. In this way, the guidelines are no longer seen as technical accessories for one-time finalization, but as "living documents" that are constantly corrected in practical use.¹⁵¹

5.4.6 Scope and Limitations of Application

The guidelines for the interface of the planning new city proposed in this section are refined in the context of Wuxiang New Area, a new area with strong planning control capabilities and high construction standards, and its applicability first depends on a number of premises: first, the city has a relatively complete territorial spatial planning and construction permit system, and can embed the guidelines into the legal procedures through planning conditions, design approval and completion acceptance;¹⁵² second, there are relatively concentrated development entities and management committees or similar institutions in the new area, and have the organizational ability to coordinate and promote the transformation of the demonstration section across departments; Third, the financial and maintenance capacity is sufficient to support continuous small-scale adjustments to the forecourt space, first-floor interfaces and street furniture, rather than just completing one-time construction tasks.

When these conditions are basically met, this section guidelines can be used as a supplement to the existing style guidelines and technical standards, expanding from "visual image" to "usable interface", providing a common discussion basis for planning departments, design teams and operating entities. However, in cities with insufficient institutional and resource conditions, the implementation of the guidelines will face obvious limitations: if the land transfer is mainly aimed at a single financial income, it is difficult to add use-oriented clauses to the planning conditions; If the management committee lacks cross-departmental coordination power, it will be difficult to promote the comprehensive adjustment of the demonstration section;¹⁵³ If the daily maintenance investment is limited, the front yard and node can easily become a parking lot or a closed landscape again. In these cases, this section is more likely to exist in the form of "vision and direction", and it is possible to implement it through longer period of system construction and capacity improvement.

151 Patsy Healey, *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), chap. 9.

152 Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China, *Technical Guidelines for the Compilation of Territorial Spatial Plans* (Beijing: MNR, 2019).

153 Fulong Wu, "China's Emerging Urban Governance: The Role of Development Zones and Administrative Committees," *Urban Studies* 49, no. 5 (2012): 987–1006.

5.5 Representativeness, Extrapolated Boundaries and International Dialogue

5.5.1 Representativeness of the Three-type matrix

The purpose of this study is not to exhaust all the spatial types of Chinese cities, but to cover the most critical mechanism genealogy of street interface governance in contemporary China with three types of institutions-spatial scenarios with the most structural differences: First, urban villages embody the governance path of "rules exist but the pre-control is weak, mainly based on daily management and special rectification", and the street interface presents high density, strong mixing and proliferative attachment. second, the historical district embodies the compulsory path of "clear norms, stable procedures, continuous implementation of engineering and operation", and the interface order is manifested as the first layer of unity, continuity and display; Third, the planned new area embodies the high-modernist path of "land-planning-permit-guideline pre-locking", forming a highly consistent interface with parametric control and image goal orientation, and exposing the structural tension of insufficient daily life. Together, the three constitute an institutional gradient from "consultative order" to "aesthetic order" to "parametric order", so that the mechanism of action of the legal framework can be compared and interpreted within the same analytical framework.

In the context of international studies, this tripartite is related to the concept of informal *settlement*¹⁵⁴ / *heritage quarter*¹⁵⁵ / *new town (or planned new town, CBD extension)*. There is a dialogue between urban villages and urban villages, which can be understood as an "informal-semi-formal" hybrid form in the process of institutionalized urbanization,¹⁵⁶ and its informality is the selective implementation of regulations and governance capabilities at the microscale. The historical district corresponds to the tension field of "authenticity-commercialization-everydayness"¹⁵⁷ in international heritage protection and tourism governance; The planned new area echoes the tradition of high-modernist planning, emphasizing the realization of

154 Ananya Roy, *City Requiem*, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

155 Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2012).

156 Libby Porter et al., "Informality, the Commons and the Paradoxes for Planning: Concepts and Debates for Informality and Planning," *Planning Theory & Practice* 12, no. 1 (2011): 115–153, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649357.2011.545626>.

157 Manal Khalaf, "Urban Heritage and Vernacular Studies: Parallel Evolution and Shared Challenges," *ISVS e-journal* 4, no. 3 (2016): 39–51.

replicable spatial images through macro-order and technical tools.¹⁵⁸Based on this, the representativeness of this study is not in the number of samples, but in presenting the differences in institutional mechanisms at the type endpoint, so as to propose a "contextualized rather than one-size-fits-all" strategy basis for subsequent guidance.

5.5.2 Extrapolated boundaries and conditions

The contextualized guidelines proposed in this study are transferable, but their extrapolation relies on some clear premises. First, the implementation of the guidelines requires a minimum of governance capabilities and implementation chains: including a relatively stable territorial management entity (street, community/village committee or new district management committee), basic daily inspection and problem handling mechanisms, and continuous consultation and feedback channels.¹⁵⁹ secondly, a certain degree of regulatory and procedural environment is required to enable the guidelines to be embedded in planning conditions, approval and review, completion acceptance, daily urban management or operation contracts and other institutional nodes; Otherwise, the guidelines are easy to stay at the level of value statements and technical suggestions. Third, sustainable financial and maintenance capabilities are required: especially in the context of historical districts and new districts, the stability of interface order often depends on the continuous investment in later operation and management, facility maintenance and public space, rather than one-time construction.¹⁶⁰

At the same time, this study also needs to honestly point out its applicable boundaries. For urban villages in the high-pressure situation of "extreme demolition and overall reconstruction", the relationship between space and property rights is rapidly rereallocated, the expectations of residents and merchants are highly short-term, the consultation mechanism is difficult to operate stably, and it is difficult to form continuous constraints in the guidelines.¹⁶¹ For the obvious absence of governance structure, the existence of "three no management" or the extreme informality of high disorder, and the lack of clear responsible subjects and execution

158 Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

159 United Nations, *Urban Governance and Capacity in Urban Management* (Habitat III Policy Paper).

160 Shanghai Municipal Government, "Notice on Issuing the Implementation Opinions on Accelerating the Planning and Construction of New Towns during the 14th Five-Year Plan in Shanghai (沪府规〔2021〕2号: 关于本市‘十四五’加快推进新城规划建设工作的实施意见)," February 23, 2021, accessed January 1, 2026, <https://sh.cma.gov.cn/sh/zfxxgk/zwgk/ghjh/202103/P020210318771324278829.pdf>.

161 Céline Janssen, Tom A. Daamen, and Wouter J. Verheul, "Governing Capabilities, Not Places – How to Understand Social Sustainability Implementation in Urban Development," *Urban Studies* 61, no. 2 (2024): 331–349, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00420980231179554>.

chains, the guidelines are difficult to translate into repeatable daily management practices. For historical districts, if there is a lack of stable protection institutions and operators, or if the goal of heritage protection is completely replaced by short-term commercial benefits, it is difficult to balance "unity of style" and "everyday/authenticity".¹⁶² For the planned new area, if the control regulations and planning conditions only serve land transfer and image projects for a long time, and lack institutionalized constraints on the openness of the first floor, pedestrian continuity and foreground availability, the use-oriented provisions of the guidelines will be difficult to be absorbed into the approval and acceptance system. The above conditions and boundaries jointly show that the extrapolation of this guideline is "copying mechanism", that is, achieving similar constraints and feedback structures on similar institutional nodes.

5.5.3 Situating the Findings within International Urban Theory

One of the contributions of this study is to test the macroscopic institutional and governance discussion through the visible evidence of street interfaces at the micro scale, so as to provide empirical supplementation and revision of some classic propositions in international urban theory.

First, regarding the discussion of high modernism, this study does not stop at criticizing the "excessive scale and insufficient livability" of the planned new area, but further points out that this result is not a simple design preference, but a pre-lock of the institutional toolchain composed of "land acquisition, statutory planning, permitting terms, guideline parameters, and implementation and maintenance".¹⁶³ In other words, high modernism presents itself as a parametric governance system that can be reviewed, verified, and accountable in the context of the new city in contemporary China, with the advantage of image order and reproducibility, but the cost of the institutional contraction of routineity and interface elasticity.

Second, regarding spatial justice, this study considers "who can use the interface, who bears the compliance cost, and who gets the order benefits" as the implicit question that runs through the three types of comparison. The governance of urban villages often compresses the interface use space of vulnerable groups in the name of risk and health. The unified order of historic districts may exclude self-employed people and long-term residents from the core narrative through compliance

¹⁶² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *CEPA Strategy Guidance Note on Strengthening Urban Governance* (New York: United Nations, 2023).

¹⁶³ Jane Hobson, *New Towns, the Modernist Planning Project and Social Justice: The Cases of Milton Keynes, UK and 6th October, Egypt, Working Paper no. 108* (London: Development Planning Unit, University College London, 1999), https://www.ucl.ac.uk/bartlett/sites/bartlett/files/migrated-files/40_0.pdf.

costs and expression restrictions; The image orientation of the new area may put people who lack motor vehicle resources or rely on street convenience at a disadvantage through scale and functional organization.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, this study proposes that the guidelines should not only pursue visual consistency, but also include interface use rights, compliance costs, and cultural expression accessibility into the same constraint system.¹⁶⁵

In the context of urban context, the above dialogue further points to a normative proposition: if interface governance only aims at "neat and controllable", it is easy to cause two deviations: one is "visual homogenization", that is, using neutral and standardized interfaces to smooth out the visible traces of multiculturalism; The second is "cultural performance", that is, the symbols of ethnic minorities are limited to festivals or tourism displays, rather than as part of daily life practice. The guideline system of this study therefore emphasizes that cultural expression should be accommodated through sustainable, everyday interface mechanisms (e.g., allowing specific language identifiers, business types, and street activities to exist within clear boundaries), rather than "representing diversity" through one-off landscape decorations.

5.5.4 Conclusion: The interface serves as an observation window for the rule of law and urban governance

Returning to the core question at the beginning of the paper, the reason why the street interface has research value is not that it is the end result of urban design, but that it provides an observable and comparable "institutional cross-section": legal provisions, planning permissions, governance actions and daily life intersect here, and abstract normativity is transformed into concrete and visible materials, openings, attachments, identification systems and ways of use. Through the comparative analysis of the three types of typical spaces in Nanning, three main contributions were formed in this study.

First, this paper proposes and tests the analytical framework of "law-governance-form" at the empirical level, emphasizing that institutions do not shape all spatial types in the same way, but produce differentiated results at the interface scale through different implementation chains. Second, this paper compares the three types of urban villages, historical districts and planned new areas, revealing the genealogy of mechanisms generated by interfaces in Chinese cities under different institutional

164 David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1973).

165 Francesca Piazzoni, Jocelyn Poe, and Ettore Santi, "What Design for Urban Design Justice?," *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 17, no. 3 (2024): 379–400, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2022.2074522>.

scenarios: from consultative order to aesthetic order to parametric order, and explains how "order gain" and "daily loss" occur in different ways in different spaces. Third, this paper translates the above mechanism differences into contextualized guidelines, and tries to embed design suggestions into executable institutional nodes (planning conditions, guideline parameters, operating rules and daily management), providing an actionable path for practice departments to "from problem diagnosis to rule implementation", and placing them in the governance issues of local urban context and international theoretical dialogue.

Future research can be expanded along two paths: first, more systematic quantitative methods (such as statistics of interface opening rate, continuous interface length, information density, and walking attraction) are introduced to validate and expand the qualitative findings of this study, while maintaining the interface diagnostic framework; Second, the framework of "three types and contextualization guidelines" is applied to the comparative study of other cities and countries to test their portability and necessary adjustments, so as to promote cross-context discussions on the relationship between institutions, governance and street interfaces.

5.6 Conclusion and Outlook

Taking Nanning as a case, this study analyzes the transmission chain of "law-governance-form" from the street interface of a urban context, and tries to answer three interrelated questions: first, how the laws and policies in contemporary Chinese cities are transmitted to the street interface scale through different levels of governance structure, and generate differentiated spatial results; second, in the three typical spatial types of urban villages, historical districts and planned new areas, what kind of institutional logic and interface form do this transmission chain present? Third, in the context of urban context, how to reserve a reasonable interface space for daily life and cultural expression in addition to the requirements of security and order. Through systematic field surveys, text analysis and cross-case comparisons of Wanxiu Village, Three Streets and Two Alleys and Wuxiang New Area, this paper puts forward several situational conclusions at three levels: mechanism identification, type framework and design guidelines.

First, the research shows that the street interface is not only determined by market preference or design taste, but also the material carrier of hierarchical translation and selective implementation of laws and policies in the local governance system. In Wanxiu Village, laws at the national and local levels are not absent, but they have been reorganized into a consultative order in the chain of "weak pre-planning, strong daily control, and intermittent special rectification": grid governance,

civilized city creation and safety inspection constitute the main field of interface governance, and the interface form continues to "wash" and grow between norms, risks and livelihoods. In the three streets and two lanes, heritage protection regulations, local regulations and operating mechanisms are superimposed, and the "style" is technicized and procedural, making the street interface a concentrated projection of aesthetic order and tourism narrative. In contrast, Wuxiang New Area presents a typical "high modernist" path: state-owned land transfer and statutory planning pre-lock block structure, planning conditions and technical guidelines clause image goals, and the implementation of urban management and the new area management committee further strengthens the consistency and reproducibility of the interface. Together, these three types constitute the three main paths of law on street interfaces in contemporary Chinese cities: the consultative path, the compulsory path and the high modernist path.

Second, from the perspective of spatial results, these three paths generate contrasting typological characteristics at the street interface level. The interface of Wanxiu Village is based on the basic schema of "high density-strong mixing-proliferative attachment": the narrow streets and alleys carry the superimposed pressure of rental economy, swing operation and daily piles, and the interface has long been in the fluctuating balance of "rectification-rebound-renegotiation". Through the renovation and unified operation of the three streets and two lanes, the continuity of the street walls, the consistency of materials and the regularity of signboards have been significantly improved, but they have also greatly compressed the visibility of residents' daily life and local urban context cultural practices on the interface, which is more inclined to serve tourists' travel and consumption paths. Wuxiang New Area presents a highly orderly and neat interface on a macro level: super blocks, main roads first, large front yard and lobby first floor together constitute a "vehicle scale" street landscape, but from the pedestrian scale, problems such as continuous "no event interface", insufficient openness of the first floor and inaccessibility of the front yard are widespread, and daily life and street economy are squeezed into the inner street or inside the building. The tension between the three results reveals how contemporary Chinese cities pay the price of routineity and diversity in different institutional scenarios while pursuing a clean, orderly, and modern image.

Third, at the methodological level, this paper systematically connects macro law-governance analysis with micro street observation by establishing an empirical framework based on interface dimensions. On the one hand, the dimensions of street wall continuity, active interface ratio, signboard information density, street edge usage, node dwelling space and governance traces are combined into an "interface diagnosis toolkit", and the field observation is transformed into a comparable evidence chain through systematic photography and coding tables. On the other hand,

the study corresponds the institutional texts such as national laws, local regulations, protection plans, style guidelines, and grid governance documents with these interface characteristics, and outlines the specific transmission path between "law/policy provisions, governance behavior, and interface results". This bottom-up interface perspective helps to enrich the existing research on urban governance in China, so that law is no longer limited to abstract narratives, but can be tested and reflected through the specific state of street interfaces.

Fourth, at the level of strategy and guidelines, the paper does not try to put forward a set of universal "ideal interfaces", but puts forward differentiated design and governance suggestions based on the institutional logic and problem structure of the three types of spaces. In the types of urban villages, the guidelines emphasize that bottleneck roadways, conflict nodes and high-risk attachments are included in grid governance and community conventions through bottom-line control and negotiation without denying the livelihood swing and living attachment, and the elastic boundary is delineated between "acceptable disorder" and the bottom line of safety. In the types of historical districts, the guidelines take the identification of style elements as the starting point, and try to rebuild the balance between the unity of style and the daily and diverse cultural expression through the refined provisions of facades, signboards, arcades, laneways and node spaces, so as to avoid the historical district being completely staged into a single tourist landscape. In the types of planned new districts, the guidelines are committed to correcting a single image orientation, reincorporating the block scale, first-floor interface and forecourt space into the human-oriented scale and usability considerations, and exploring the possible path of introducing "usable interfaces" within the framework of high modernism through demonstration street sections and adjustable rules. These guidelines are not ready-made technical standards, but attempt to provide planners, designers, and governors with a framework of judgment that can be adapted locally.

From the perspective of urban context, this study also suggests an important normative problem: under the current urban governance paradigm of "cleanliness, orderliness and safety", the lifestyle, business practices and symbolic expressions of ethnic minorities and foreign groups are often compressed at the street interface first. Whether it is the foreign tenants who are "invisible" in the consultative order of

Village, the local catering that is replaced by unified signboards and neutral brands in the three streets and two alleys, or the multicultural space that is difficult to find a place in the Wuxiang New Area, the "neatness and uniformity" of the interface has weakened the visibility of the city as a social and functional diversity exchange venue to some extent. The differentiation guidelines proposed in this paper are aimed at exploring how to retain the necessary space and time gaps for multicultural practice through small interface adjustments within the existing institutional framework.

Of course, there are some limitations to this study. First, the research focuses on the case of three points in Nanning, although these three types of spaces are representative in terms of type, but they cannot cover all interface situations in Chinese cities. Historical districts, urban villages and new districts in other regions may present different combinations in terms of land system, economic structure and ethnic composition, which need to be further expanded and compared in future research. Second, due to the consideration of length and feasibility, this study mainly adopts a qualitative approach, and does not systematically introduce quantitative indicators and long-term follow-up data of large samples. The effectiveness of interface guidelines and their impact on daily behavior need to be verified through evaluation and revision at a longer scale and in more cases. Third, although the paper tries to introduce the perspectives of residents, merchants, and grassroots rulers in the narrative, the cross-analysis of the internal differences of different user groups and the dimensions of gender and intergenerational is still insufficient, which limits a more detailed understanding of "whose interface is seen/erased".

Based on the above limitations, future research can be carried out in three directions: first, to test the "law-governance-form" analysis framework proposed in this study in a wider range of cities and regions, especially to include border cities, small and medium-sized ethnic cities and cross-border metropolitan areas; second, on the basis of the existing qualitative diagnosis, build an operable interface evaluation index system, and transform the dimensions of walkability, activity, diversity and safety into traceable data, so as to provide a more solid basis for the adjustment of the guidelines; The third is to introduce more participatory methods to discuss and revise the interface guidelines with residents, merchants and grassroots rulers, so that they are not just tools for technical experts and managers, but also multi-subject consultation texts. In this process, the interface governance of urban context is expected to change from a single image project to a public practice that continuously reconciles between safety, fairness and difference.

Overall, this paper attempts to show how the contemporary Chinese law and governance system is concretized, shaped, and contested at the street interface scale through three typical spaces of a specific city, and explores how to reserve the necessary space for daily life and multicultural expression through refined design and governance guidelines within the existing institutional framework. Nanning's experience is not only a microcosm of the specific stages of China's urbanization, but also a mirror to understand the tension between "high modernist planning, local governance practice, and street life" in the global southern city. How to find a more balanced interface form in this tension is not only the starting point of this study, but also the open question it hopes to leave for future work.

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Appendix A: Photographic Documentation and Coding Table for Chapter 4

A.1 Purpose and Positioning of This Overview

This overview document clarifies how the fieldwork materials were generated, structured, and analytically integrated into Chapter 4 of the dissertation. It explains the internal logic linking the photographic documentation protocol, the systematically named photo archive, the Excel-based coding table, and the comparative observations developed across the three case studies.

In this research, photography functions as an empirical evidence tool through which legal frameworks and governance mechanisms are examined at the scale of the street interface. Each photograph constitutes an analyzable data unit and is expected to support a specific analytical claim in the main text. The overview therefore serves to make explicit the evidentiary chain underlying the empirical chapters.

A.2 Documentation Procedure

The fieldwork adopts a structured photographic survey, and its methodological logic follows a sequential and closed-loop structure:

1. Analytical dimensions are defined in advance through a shooting checklist, corresponding to key mechanisms identified in the legal–governance–morphology framework (spatial structure, governance visibility, interface outcomes, and temporal dynamics).

2. Photographs are organized into a unified plate structure (Plate 1–Plate 3) to ensure internal coherence and cross-case comparability.

3. Each photograph is indexed and coded in an Excel table, translating visual observations into comparable interface variables and governance indicators.

4. These coded variables are then mobilized in Chapter 4 as empirical evidence, supporting comparative interpretation across different institutional contexts.

Through this process, abstract legal and policy instruments are systematically linked to observable spatial outcomes, forming a complete analytical loop: legal and policy tools → governance implementation structures → visible interface conditions → comparative inference.

A.3 Photographic Checklist

The photographic documentation was designed to examine how legal and policy frameworks are translated through grassroots governance structures into visible street interface forms. All photographs were collected with the explicit requirement that they be usable as evidence in the main analytical text.

Several non-negotiable principles governed the fieldwork:

1. Each photograph must be spatially identifiable, including street segment or node, orientation, and where relevant, time of capture.
2. Priority is given to typical conditions rather than extreme cases, ensuring that analytical claims rest on representative rather than exceptional situations.
3. Human figures are not treated as primary subjects; they appear only as indicators of scale or patterns of use, with the analytical focus remaining on spatial interfaces.

A.4 Plate Structure and Cross-Reference with Chapter 4

The photographic dataset is organized into three thematic plates, each aligned with a specific analytical function in Chapter 4.

Plate 1: Spatial Skeleton: This plate documents the underlying spatial structure—street width, enclosure, connectivity, and nodal conditions—that generates persistent interface pressure in high-density urban villages. In Chapter 4, these images provide the structural baseline explaining why governance interventions operate under constant spatial constraints.

Plate 2: Visible Governance Artifacts: This plate records material traces of governance, including grid-based management signage, public notices, sanitation facilities, regulatory markings, and rectification remnants. These images demonstrate how legal and policy instruments enter everyday space as visible devices rather than remaining abstract texts.

Plate 3: Core Interface Outcomes: As the primary evidentiary set, this plate captures how governance practices shape building frontages, signage systems, attachments, outdoor occupation, and circulation conflicts. The standardized three-angle documentation (frontal elevation, oblique perspective, and detail shot) enables consistent coding of interface variables such as continuity, active frontage, and proliferative attachments.

A.5 Site Selection and Expected Volume

The protocol deliberately limits the number of images to ensure analytical clarity rather than visual exhaustiveness. A total of approximately 18–22 photographs is considered sufficient. This strategy prioritizes internal consistency and interpretability over extensive spatial coverage.

A.6 Structural Equivalence Across the Three Case Studies

The same plate structure and documentation logic were applied to San Jie Liang Xiang and Wuxiang New District, ensuring methodological equivalence across cases. In Three streets and two alleys, the protocol emphasizes how heritage

regulations, project-based refurbishment, and unified operation produce an aestheticized and highly regulated interface order. In Wuxiang New District, it focuses on how statutory planning, permitting conditions, and design guidelines generate a parameterized interface order, while simultaneously revealing weak coupling with everyday street life.

A.7 Role of the Excel Coding Table in the Evidence Chain

The Excel coding table functions as the analytical bridge between visual material and textual analysis.

Rows correspond to uniquely identified photographs.

Columns represent predefined interface variables and governance indicators derived from the theoretical framework.

Existing entries are preserved, and any additional judgments are required to be grounded in directly observable visual evidence and shared coding criteria.

A.8 File Naming and Indexing Convention

Each photograph follows a standardized identifier incorporating case, plate, location, and sequence number (e.g., WXV-P3-A1_001). A photo index links each image to its corresponding analytical section, facilitating cross-referencing between visual evidence and textual analysis.

Appendix B: Summary of Photo Coding Tables

This appendix reproduces the complete Excel-based coding materials used for the photographic analysis in Chapter 4. It contains three tables: the governance codebook (B.1), the interface codebook (B.2), the full photo index (B.3) and photos. The two codebooks define the coding categories used to interpret governance mechanisms and street-interface conditions, while the photo index records the complete set of photographic observations, identifiers, locations, plate categories, coding variables, and Chapter 4 cross-references.

Table B.1. Governance coding categories

Code (Coding)*	Chinese Term	English	Definition	Observable Evidence	Suggested Applicable Area / Medium
IF-OP	Tongyi Yunying	Operational governance	Order and streetscape consistency are maintained through the operator's routine rules, contracts, and inspections.	Unified shop signage/wayfinding; operator staff conducting inspections; event approval procedures and crowd-guidance facilities.	Historic districts: operations manual / merchant contracts / event approval system.
IF-HER	Baohu guanli	Heritage protection administration	District form and interface information systems are shaped through conservation regulations, repair standards, and heritage-character control requirements.	Heritage designation signage; conservation repair materials and components; public display of heritage design guidelines.	Historic districts: conservation plans / restoration projects / character-control guidelines.
GM-R	Richang guanli	Routine management	Everyday streetscape order is maintained via regular patrols, complaint work orders, and immediate corrective actions.	Patrol/cleaning activities; reminder boards; traces of on-the-spot correction for minor violations.	All types: routine inspections / cleaning services / order maintenance.
GM-S	Zhuanxiang zhengzhi	Special campaign	Within a defined period, prominent problems are addressed through concentrated inspections, enforcement, and rectification.	Vacancies after concentrated clearance / new markings; time-bounded public notices; before–after contrasts of interventions.	Urban villages / key nodes: targeted campaigns.
GM-G	Wanggehua zhili	Grid-based governance	Responsibilities are decomposed into grid units to form a closed loop of discovery–reporting–handling–feedback.	Grid-officer identifiers; grid disclosure boards; records of coordinated handling (notices / ledgers).	Urban villages / communities: grid-based closed-loop governance.

Table B.2 Interface Codebook

Field*	Specification / Definition	Recommended Quantification	Suggested Rating Scheme (Optional)	Notes
Facade Continuity	Continuous street wall / continuous interface (excluding non-permeable breaks).	0–3 ordinal scale	0 = Low; 1 = Medium; 2 = Relatively High; 3 = High	Used to compare interface continuity across street segments.
Active Frontage	Proportion of ground-floor interface length that is accessible and/or interactive.	% (per 100 m street segment)	0 = <20%; 1 = 20–40%; 2 = 40–60%; 3 = >60%	Key indicator for comparing new districts versus historic districts.
Transparency	Proportion of visible openings at ground floor (doors/windows/display windows).	% or ordinal scale	0 = Low; 1 = Medium; 2 = High	Related to commercial display and perceived street safety.
Signage Control	Consistency and compliance of signage placement, size, materials, and typography.	Ordinal category (High / Medium / Low)	Low / Medium / High	Core indicator of institutionalized regulation in “Three Streets and Two Lanes.”
Encroachment	Continuous length or occupancy rate of spillover uses (e.g., outdoor displays) and/or right-of-way encroachment.	m per 100 m, or %, or ordinal scale	0 = None; 1 = Light; 2 = Moderate; 3 = Severe	Associated with movement conflicts.
Bottleneck / Conflict	Number and types of bottleneck points / conflict points.	count per 100 m + description	—	Specify conflict types (e.g., queuing / spillover vending / wayfinding crowding).

Table B.3 Photo Index and Coding Records and Photos

Note: Node Type indicates the spatial position of each photograph: MS = Main Street, SL = Side Lane, and KN = Key Node.

Shot Type indicates the photographic angle: FE = Front Elevation, OV = Oblique View, DC = Detail Close-up, and P = Panorama.

Governance Mode refers to the dominant form of governance observed in the image, while Governance Evidence records the visible material traces of governance, such as signage, notices, markings, facilities, or rectification remnants.

Facade Continuity records the approximate length or degree of continuous street wall.

Active Frontage indicates the estimated proportion or grade of visually and functionally active ground-floor frontage.

Transparency, Signage Control, and Encroachment / Conflict describe observable interface conditions according to the coding categories defined in Tables B.1 and B.2.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WXV-P1-1_001	MS	FE	GM-R	Nighttime entrance of an older neighborhood; a community-name arch is present, but no explicit governance regime is displayed.	18 m	~30%	Level 2 (partial shop visibility; uneven lighting)	Level 3 (mix of illuminated characters and temporary lightboxes)	Curbside e-bike parking + vendor spillover; nighttime passage is constrained.
WXV-P1-2_001	MS	OV	GM-S	Main street of the neighborhood; ground-floor commerce has formed spontaneously; no unified management signage observed.	22 m	~50%	Level 2 (glazed storefronts, but heavy occlusion)	Level 3 (multi-scale signs juxtaposed)	Outdoor operations + short-term parking occupy pedestrian space.
WXV-P1-2_002	SL	FE	GM-R	Continuation of the same street segment; governance absent; market logic dominates.	24 m	~55%	Level 2 (visible but cluttered frontage)	Level 3 (neon and lightboxes co-exist)	Vending intermixes with through-movement, creating a persistent bottleneck.
WXV-P1-2_003	SL	DC	GM-R	Night-market street; no clear enforcement or functional zoning observed.	20 m	~70%	Level 1 (fully open operations)	Level 3 (high visual competition)	Stalls encroach from both sides; central clear width is <2 m.
WXV-P1-2_004	SL	DC	GM-R	Tail section of the night market; dense vendors; lax management.	16 m	~65%	Level 1 (directly facing the street)	Level 3 (no unified standards)	Pedestrians and e-bikes mix; frequent conflicts.
WXV-P1-3_001	SL	DC	GM-G	Aging residential alley; community governance information posted on walls.	12 m	~15%	Level 3 (closed residential interface)	Level 2 (functional signage only)	No obvious encroachment, but alley width is inherently narrow.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WXV-P1-4_001	KN	FE	GM-G	Internal branch road within the community; governance mainly via posted notices.	10 m	0%	Level 3 (no commercial frontage)	Level 1 (no commercial signage)	No encroachment; space primarily for circulation.
WXV-P2-1_001	SL	FE	GM-S	Area enclosed by temporary construction hoarding; explicit slogan "Rectification in accordance with the law."	0 m	0%	Level 3 (fully closed)	Level 1 (standardized governmental signage)	Setback behind hoarding is insufficient, producing an inactive street edge.
WXV-P2-2_001	MS	OV	GM-G	Construction transition zone; hoarding coexists with a refuse point.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (no interface interaction)	Level 1 (no commercial identifiers)	Co-presence of hoarding and waste point; creates a negative frontage condition.
WXV-P2-3_001	MS	OV	GM-G	Temporary-hoarding interface with scattered governance/notice postings; transitional management.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (fully closed; no interface interaction)	Level 1 (functional/governance signage)	Refuse drop-off immediately adjacent to the pedestrian path, prompting local avoidance and potential movement disturbance.
WXV-P2-3_002	SL	OV	GM-S	Older back-street space; waste facilities clustered; governance responsibility information posted.	6 m	0%	Level 3 (purely service interface)	Level 1 (functional signage only)	Overflowing bins; pedestrians detour at night.
WXV-P2-3_003	SL	DC	GM-G	Residual public corner space under a large tree; no clear functional partitioning.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (no interface)	Level 1 (no signage)	E-bikes and a waste point overlap, occupying the corner.
WXV-P2-3_004	MS	DC	GM-G	Residential street; traffic and parking control signage installed.	14 m	0%	Level 3 (residential enclosure)	Level 2 (primarily traffic signage)	On-street parking compresses slow-mobility space.
WXV-P2-4_001	MS	OV	GM-S	Older residential lane; prohibitive governance notices posted on walls.	9 m	~5%	Level 3 (highly closed)	Level 2 (governance notices dominate)	Clutter accumulation; insufficient clear width for passage.
WXV-P2-4_002	SL	OV	GM-G	Continuation of the same lane; dense postings of everyday informational notices.	11 m	~10%	Level 3 (low interaction)	Level 2 (non-commercial signage)	Temporary e-bike stops create nodal blockage.
WXV-P2-4_003	MS	FE	GM-R	Nodal point in the lane: mixed commercial and logistical/service functions.	13 m	~20%	Level 2 (partially occluded)	Level 3 (commercial and non-commercial signs co-present)	Waste point conflicts with entrances/exits.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WXV-P2-4_004	MS	FE	GM-S	Corner commercial node; parking guidance coexists with storefronts.	15 m	~25%	Level 2 (shop windows + occlusion)	Level 3 (prominent illuminated signage)	Parking ingress creates a short-term bottleneck.
WXV-P2-5_001	KN	FE	GM-G	Perimeter wall interface; fire-safety / no-encroachment signage installed.	18 m	0%	Level 3 (fully closed)	Level 1 (standardized signage)	Temporary tables at night occupy the vehicular edge.
WXV-P2-5_002	KN	OV	GM-G	Narrow passage with embedded religious/folk installations.	4 m	~5%	Level 3 (symbolic interface)	Level 2 (non-commercial symbols)	Insufficient width; becomes a congestion point during festivals.
WXV-P2-5_003	KN	FE	GM-S	Community service center facade; explicit institutionalized entrance.	22 m	~30%	Level 2 (visible but controlled)	Level 1 (unified governmental signage)	No obvious encroachment; stable spatial order.
WXV-P2-5_004	KN	P	GM-S	Open parking/empty-lot space; some facilities and reminder boards at the entrance, but governed mainly by “site use” logic; no explicit display of community governance arrangements.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (open parcel; not a street-facing interface)	Level 2 (limited functional wayfinding; non-commercial)	Large-area parking and pedestrian–vehicle mixing pose potential conflicts; uneven/damaged surface reduces comfort but does not constitute a typical bottleneck.
WXV-P2-5_005	MS	DC	GM-G	Edge buildings of an urban village adjacent to sanitation point; governance mainly via waste-sorting/disposal facilities; lacks segment-level order guidance.	10 m	~10%	Level 3 (solid walls + security grilles)	Level 2 (limited shop signs/information postings)	Bins and facilities occupy the curb, compressing the walking band; vehicles/e-bikes passing tight to the edge create localized conflict points.
WXV-P2-5_006	SL	DC	GM-G	Building side wall and temporary items (tables/chairs/clutter) indicate “self-organized use”; governance traces mainly via scattered postings.	8 m	~10%	Level 3 (predominantly solid wall; weak street visibility)	Level 3 (multiple small ads/posters on doors and walls)	Small tables/chairs and stored items spill outward, occupying edge space; on narrow segments this readily forms micro-bottlenecks.
WXV-P2-6_001	SL	DC	GM-S	White wall with public banners/signage (public health or order advocacy): “visible but lightweight” governance.	12 m	~15%	Level 3 (this side is a closed wall)	Level 2 (mainly slogan-based; limited commercial competition)	At night, vendors/pedestrian flow intermix with e-bikes; compression corridor forms between wall base and stalls, generating conflicts.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WXV-P2-6_002	SL	DC	GM-G	Explicit grassroots police/community liaison notice board (with phone and personnel info): strong governance evidence (formal institutional display).	2 m	0%	Level 3 (no commercial frontage)	Level 2 (relatively formal notice board, but damaged/with traces of layered ads)	No obvious encroachment; main issue is wall damage and insufficient information maintenance (not a bottleneck).
WXV-P3-A1_001	SL	DC	GM-G	Interior courtyard/arched entry with couplets and “in-village order symbols”; more ritual/community symbolism than explicit rule text.	14 m	~10%	Level 3 (clear wall/courtyard boundary; primarily everyday living interface)	Level 2 (few stall placards/couplet decorations)	Tricycles and clutter occupy inner entry space; usually bypassable but reduces accessibility and fire-clear width.
WXV-P3-A1_002	MS	FE	GM-S	Main-street commercial node; order is more driven by market and traffic flows; no unified management signage (weak governance visibility).	25 m	~70%	Level 1 (many open/fully glazed storefronts)	Level 3 (stacked large signs at multiple scales; strong visual competition)	Pedestrians interweave with e-bikes/tricycles; turning and stopping at the intersection produce persistent conflict and intermittent bottlenecks.
WXV-P3-A1_003	MS	FE	GM-G	Formal medical storefront (clinic): strong “institutionalized operation” with governable/regulatable attributes.	30 m	~60%	Level 1 (glazed facade; high interior visibility)	Level 2 (more consistent sign scale; relatively stable order)	Curbside e-bike/motorcycle parking narrows the passage band; conflict intensity is moderate.
WXV-P3-A2_001	MS	FE	GM-R	Nighttime, high-intensity vending segment: order relies on self-organization and on-the-spot negotiation; no enforcement/zoning prompts observed.	20 m	~80%	Level 1 (stalls and storefronts directly face the street)	Level 3 (dense lightboxes/signs; strong visual competition)	Vendor carts occupy the carriageway center + side spillover, forcing mixed pedestrian/vehicle flow and pronounced bottlenecks (passage becomes “single-file threading”).
WXV-P3-A2_003	MS	OV	GM-G	Segment dominated by formal shops (e.g., dental clinics): “regulatable operation”; relatively stable order.	28 m	~60%	Level 1 (glazed facades; interior visible)	Level 2 (frontages relatively neat, though adjacent signs co-present)	Curb parking/e-bike stops cause localized narrowing; at peaks, potential side-swipe risk with motor traffic.
WXV-P3-A2_004	MS	OV	GM-S	Market-type segment: market sign at the entrance but lacks fine-grained spatial management.	26 m	~75%	Level 1 (fully open stalls)	Level 3 (high-density commercial signage stacking)	Spillover vending + short-term vehicle stops create sustained traffic conflicts.
WXV-P3-A3_001	SL	DC	GM-G	Typical mixed street in an urban village; governance mainly via market self-organization.	20 m	~65%	Level 1 (open business interface)	Level 3 (mix of illuminated characters and lightboxes)	Nighttime pedestrian–vehicle mixing; localized clear width insufficient.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WXV-P3-B1_001	MS	FE	GM-G	Street-facing commerce beneath residential blocks; spontaneous operation; limited governance intervention.	18 m	~55%	Level 2 (glazed storefronts but displays occlude)	Level 3 (multi-scale signs juxtaposed without order)	Outdoor storage + e-bike stops occupy pedestrian space.
WXV-P3-B1_002	MS	FE	GM-R	Continuation of the same segment; commerce and residence highly mixed.	18 m	~50%	Level 2 (partially visible)	Level 3 (inconsistent sign height and luminance)	Vending + informal parking form intermittent bottlenecks.
WXV-P3-N1_001	MS	P	GM-G	Internal urban-village alley; governance and safety information posted on walls.	10 m	~10%	Level 3 (closed residential interface)	Level 2 (primarily functional signage)	No obvious encroachment, but spatial scale is constrained.
WXV-P3-N1_002	KN	P	GM-S	Nighttime alley use intensifies; temporary stalls appear.	10 m	~25%	Level 2 (temporary operating interface)	Level 2 (handwritten/temporary signage)	Temporary stalls compress the passage width.
WXV-P3-N1_003	MS	FE	GM-R	Nighttime alley becomes marketized; lacks clear functional zoning.	12 m	~40%	Level 2 (semi-open operation)	Level 3 (temporary lightboxes + light strips)	Mixed pedestrian/vehicle flow causes short-term congestion.
WXV-P3-N1_004	MS	OV	GM-R	Tail section of the alley: governance postings exist but enforcement is weak.	12 m	~30%	Level 2 (visible but cluttered)	Level 2 (scattered information)	Clutter accumulation damages movement continuity.
WXV-P3-N1_005	KN	OV	GM-G	Mixed node of residence and temporary commerce; governance primarily via reminders.	14 m	~35%	Level 2 (semi-transparent interface)	Level 2 (non-standard signage)	Nighttime stalls + e-bike parking create bottlenecks.
TT-P1-A1_001	MS	OV	IF-OP	Historic-district commercial pedestrian lane: evidence of unified style renovation and operational management, but no explicit signage identifying the governing entity was observed.	14 m	~85%	Level 1 (highly open; commercial activity spills directly into pedestrian space)	Level 2 (relatively unified sign forms, but competition in brightness/scale persists)	Outdoor commercial spillover plus high footfall yields slow-mobility crowding, but without hard blockage.
TT-P1-A1_002	MS	OV	IF-OP	Commercial-led unified decoration; no official institutional traces.	36 m	~90%	Level 2 (windows visible; partial occlusion)	Level 2 (font form largely unified; some oversized proportions)	Decorative elements (parasols/standing boards) + non-motor stops encroach ~0.8 m.
TT-P1-A1_003	SL	FE	IF-OP	Imitation-heritage decoration and lanterns; no explicit governance signage.	28 m	~60%	Level 2 (windows visible, but reflective glare occludes)	Level 3 (inconsistent shop signs; font size unmanaged)	Plant pots + small tables/chairs mildly encroach, single side 0.5–0.8 m.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
TT-P1-A1_004	SL	FE	IF-OP	Unified decoration + chain-brand control, implying an institutional operational logic.	41 m	~85%	Level 2 (windows + open doors; some glare)	Level 2 (brand prominent but placement unified)	No encroachment; clear frontage.
TT-P1-A1_005	MS	OV	IF-OP	Chain restaurant with unified renovation + soft streetscape; no explicit governance signage.	30 m	~65%	Level 1 (high glazing transparency; activities visible)	Level 2 (signs concentrated; visually saturated)	Tables/chairs + ad boards near corner interfere with the confluence zone by ~0.8 m.
TT-P1-A1_006	MS	OV	GM-R	Pedestrian street wayfinding is clear; operational traces strong; no enforcement/institutional information provided.	33 m	~95%	Level 1 (full-height glass + internal lighting)	Level 2 (unified fascia datum line; colors slightly mixed)	No substantive encroachment; clear width remains intact.
TT-P1-A2_001	MS	OV	GM-R	Only lightbox decoration + outdoor items; no prominent institutional governance.	26 m	~50%	Level 2 (partial glazing; much is closed wall)	Level 3 (varied forms; proportions uncontrolled)	E-bike + parasol + signboard combination occupies ~1.2 m of sidewalk.
TT-P1-A2_002	MS	OV	IF-OP	Unified decorative style but no enforcement/regulatory signage observed.	38 m	~85%	Level 1 (continuous display windows; high visibility depth)	Level 1 (uniform font size; no occlusion)	No clutter/obstruction; smooth movement line.
TT-P1-A2_003	KN	P	IF-OP	Unified decoration evidently led by an operator (institutionalized beautification).	40 m	~90%	Level 2 (glazed windows; strong glare)	Level 2 (uniform sizing; some logo styles deviate)	No encroachment; pedestrian path clear.
TT-P1-A2_004	SL	OV	GM-R	Soft decoration only; no governance-agency information or management facilities.	32 m	~80%	Level 1 (full display openness; clear product visibility)	Level 3 (chaotic shop-name layout; uneven lightbox heights)	E-bikes + vending items co-present; encroachment ~1.2 m near intersection.
TT-P1-A2_005	MS	P	IF-OP	Clear institutional signage (government-style notice boards + management markings).	35 m	~55%	Level 2 (visible frontage but single-side window type)	Level 1 (standardized signage; balanced proportions)	No encroachment; clear boundaries.
TT-P1-A3_001	SL	DC	IF-OP	Strong commercial curation traces (lighting + unified fascias), no governance signage.	28 m	~80%	Level 2 (partial transparency; mixed materials)	Level 2 (uniform font size; rich forms)	Stalls + parasol frames + barriers interfere with passage; both sides total ~1.2 m.
TT-P1-A3_002	SL	DC	IF-OP	No governance signage; only spontaneous vending and original brick-wall fabric.	18 m	~30%	Level 3 (no glazed interface; strong enclosure)	Level 3 (no unity; temporary signage)	Non-motor vehicles + stalls severely encroach; bottleneck width <1.2 m.
TT-P1-B1_001	KN	P	IF-OP	Strong operational traces: official stalls + bookshelf structures; plaza governance is explicit.	33 m	~75%	Level 2 (multiple visible interfaces but not continuous display)	Level 2 (moderate proportions; content relatively dense)	Large furniture + bookshelves occupy the central movement line; congestion within ~2 m range.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
TT-P1-B1_002	SL	OV	IF-OP	No governance signage; repetitive structure; likely an original narrow passage.	24 m	~10%	Level 2 (limited glazing; mostly closed)	Level 1 (highly unified; restrained style)	Pipes/railings occupy one side, but the corridor remains complete; not a conflict node.
TT-P1-B1_003	SL	FE	IF-OP	No governance signage, but an entrance guidance system is present.	20 m	~15%	Level 3 (closed wooden doors; no interface interaction)	Level 2 (simple main facade but large level differences)	Advertising boards occupy the corner and are close to flagpoles; merging-conflict risk.
TT-P1-N1_001	KN	P	IF-OP	Plaza area with visible governance (wayfinding, zoning signs) but lacking formal public notices.	40 m	~70%	Level 1 (display windows + fully transparent fascia)	Level 1 (highly unified; regularized typography)	Plaza center is open; no obvious encroachment or conflict.
TT-P1-N1_002	KN	FE	IF-OP	Structural entrance fascia + scenographic installation; public-space set dressing is explicit.	38 m	~65%	Level 1 (fully glazed; open interface)	Level 2 (partly visually complex)	Edge installations present, but the main path is clear; no blockage.
TT-p1-N1_003	KN	P	GM-R	Corner at an entrance/exit; aging structure; no governance facilities.	15 m	~10%	Level 2 (window grids but not transparent)	Level 3 (window grids occluded; ads block view)	Stall + planter combination occupies steps, blocking part of the pedestrian line.
TT-P2-1_001	KN	DC	IF-OP	Government-style identifiers (metro + municipal facilities) mixed with operator vending.	10 m	~25%	Level 2 (display windows + metro lighting transparency)	Level 3 (small fonts at entrance; severe occlusion)	Stall platform + steps + electrical box block the main entrance, forming a visual bottleneck.
TT-P2-1_002	KN	OV	IF-HER	No governance signage; only rear walls of residences or service facade.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (closed window grids; non-transparent)	Level 3 (no signs; no interaction)	No encroachment, but fully closed interface with no publicness.
TT-P2-1_003	KN	FE	IF-OP	Main entrance of a commercial street has thematic scenography; no institutional signage observed.	25 m	~40%	Level 2 (glazed openness + occluded fascia)	Level 3 (mixed fonts and color blocks; visually chaotic)	Stalls + temporary tables/chairs encroach on both sides; usable main width ~1.5 m.
TT-P2-1_004	MS	FE	IF-HER	City-wall heritage-protection area; explicit governmental signage + step structure.	35 m	~10%	Level 3 (no commerce; fully closed)	Level 1 (no shop signage)	No substantive encroachment; stepped entry has a ramped slope but is not fully accessible.
TT-P2-1_005	MS	FE	IF-HER	Clear brand operation: display windows + light strips; governance logic is merchant self-management.	16 m	~80%	Level 1 (full glazing; clear visibility)	Level 2 (high-saturation lightboxes; unified typography)	Crowd gathering in front of the shop; no clear blockage.
TT-P2-2_001	MS	DC	IF-HER	Heritage imitation/reconstruction area: no governance signage; display-oriented repairs only.	18 m	0%	Level 3 (closed wall; no commercial activity)	Level 1 (no shop signage)	No encroachment, but not a publicly interactive space.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
TT-P2-2_002	KN	P	IF-HER	Street/plaza node: no governance signage; scenic elements only.	28 m	~30%	Level 2 (no display windows; some activities visible)	Level 2 (standard fonts but loose layout)	Peripheral clutter overlaps with activities; intersecting paths.
TT-P2-2_003	SL	FE	IF-OP	Residential buildings outside governance scope; laundry drying and exposed AC units observed.	22 m	~10%	Level 2 (small windows mostly closed; no interface interaction)	Level 3 (no commercial signage; domestic items salient)	Plants under balconies + household spillover create visual conflict and encroachment.
TT-P2-2_004	MS	DC	IF-OP	Mid-rise residences; weak governance; open windows + chaotic AC placement.	24 m	~20%	Level 2 (partially open windows; domestic visibility)	Level 3 (no systematic signage)	No physical encroachment, but fragmented sightlines and poor transparency.
TT-P2-5_001	MS	DC	IF-OP	Explicit governmental signage: systematic introduction of “Three Streets and Two Lanes” and conservation-zone information.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (no activity interface; cultural explanation only)	Level 1 (standard governmental signboard)	No encroachment; static interpretive facility.
TT-P2-5_002	MS	DC	IF-OP	Another governmental information board: introduction to Jinshi Lane; standardized form.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (closed wall; no interface)	Level 1 (no commercial signage; governmental style)	Wall-adjacent placement; no interference with passage.
TT-P3-01_001	MS	OV	GM-R	Urban street/alley: dense dining and shop signs; no obvious governance measures observed.	20 m	~60%	Level 2 (glazed storefronts but extensive window films)	Level 3 (numerous signs; highly inconsistent typography)	E-bikes + stall chairs + lightboxes align side-by-side; corridor obstructed; usable width ~1.2 m.
TT-P3-01_002	KN	FE	IF-HER	Government-style decorative fascia is clear; guiding layout at plaza center; governance signage not prominent.	30 m	~50%	Level 2 (doors/windows open but occluded; partly closed)	Level 3 (occluded fascia fonts; high lightbox visual load)	Stalls + dining tables on both sides; entrance remains passable at ~1.5 m.
TT-P3-02_002	MS	-	GM-S	Encroaching tricycle food cart with no governance signage; mixed vehicle functions.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (severe occlusion; no interface transparency)	Level 3 (ads cover the cart body; no standardized typography)	Clear encroachment; trunk junction blocked by up to 2 m, producing nodal blockage.
TT-P3-02_003	MS	-	GM-S	Stall fencing states “No Parking,” but no identifiable governance entity signage.	3 m	~30%	Level 2 (stall cart half-open)	Level 3 (large, messy typography; high visual noise)	Tables/chairs + stalls continuously placed; encroaches >1.2 m of the passage.
TT-P3-03_001	MS	OV	GM-S	Old-street entrance with explicit gatehead + guard booth; some “civility” reminder boards.	18 m	~30%	Level 2 (limited transparent areas of stall carts; mostly occluded)	Level 3 (vendor-designed signs; no style unity)	Stalls + canopies + wayfinding system intermix; encroachment compresses passage to ~1.5 m.
TT-P3-03_002	MS	FE	GM-R	Arcade (qilou) buildings well-renovated; brand stores clustered; no governance notices or guidance system observed.	38 m	~60%	Level 1 (high display transparency)	Level 2 (primarily standardized brand signage)	Waste-collection tricycle stops temporarily; obstacle compresses pedestrian flow by ~1 m.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
TT-P3-G2_001	MS	-	GM-R	Notice board explicitly issued by the urban management department; issuing unit is clearly signed.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (notice only; no spatial interaction)	Level 1 (governmental; non-commercial)	Placed along the wall; no spatial interference.
TT-P3-G2_002	MS	OV	GM-R	Wall surface shows no governance traces; some postings and rudimentary bulletin boards.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (closed wall)	Level 1 (single non-governmental posting; outdated typography)	Bins + plant piles obstruct visual path; actual passage remains unobstructed.
TT-P3-N1_001	MS	OV	GM-R	Storefront spillover mixed with arcade use; no governance boundary lines or guidance.	22 m	~60%	Level 2 (transparent storefronts but shelves occlude)	Level 3 (self-installed lightboxes/posters; excessive color)	Tables/chairs, e-bikes, and merchandise displays mix, occupying ~2 m of the passage.
TT-P3-N2_001	MS	OV	IF-OP	Clearly labeled historic district: unified fascia forms but no control information.	32 m	~70%	Level 2 (large windows but films reduce sightlines)	Level 2 (unified lightbox proportions; consistent tones)	No encroachment, but pedestrian path is constrained; wall close to curb.
TT-P3-S1_001	MS	OV	IF-OP	Large commercial district: weak governance traces; entrance lacks guidance.	45 m	~80%	Level 1 (fully transparent display windows)	Level 2 (uniform typography; brand standards)	Small red carpet + step buffer; does not block the main route.
TT-P3-S2_001	KN	P	IF-OP	Themed renewal project building: name is prominent but no governance signage; peripheral exhibition management is lax.	22 m	~40%	Level 2 (partial transparency; main facade closed)	Level 2 (brand identifiers clear but color coordination poor)	Stalls + displays intermix in plaza space, occupying >2 m without demarcation.
TT-P3-S2_002	SL	OV	IF-OP	Cultural leisure alley zone: no explicit governance arrangements indicated; sunshades are interwoven with the storefront layout.	14 m	~60%	Level 2 (windows visible but shaded by umbrellas)	Level 3 (dense light signs; disordered typography; no unified style)	Shops + footfall + umbrellas overlap; corridor remaining only ~1 m; conflicts salient.
WX-P1-A1_001	MS	P	IF-OP	Urban arterial road + river-crossing bridge: clear lane separation and greenery; only traffic control facilities; lacks pedestrian-governance information.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (pure vehicular interface; no pedestrian frontage)	Level 1 (standard traffic signage; system-unified)	Traffic is highly saturated but confined to vehicle lanes; no pedestrian encroachment or bottlenecks.
WX-P1-A2_001	MS	P	GM-R	New-district CBD towers + mixed-use complex: complete signals; no refined pedestrian or street-activity governance signage.	60 m	~20%	Level 1 (podium fully glazed; relatively transparent)	Level 1 (building identifiers/wayfinding restrained)	Sidewalk and carriageway well separated; no encroachment; only corner weaving of vehicle flows.
WX-P1-A2_002	MS	P	IF-OP	Signalized intersection with accessibility signage; surrounding area is residential + green space.	20 m	~10%	Level 3 (fences + green space dominate; little visible activity)	Level 1 (unified traffic signs; minimal commercial signage)	Forklifts + barriers temporarily occupy the crossing area; ~2 m clear width remains.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WX-P1-A3_001	KN	P	IF-OP	Transport-hub plaza: clustered e-bikes and advertising tricycles; unclear management entity; no posted plaza-use rules.	40 m	~30%	Level 2 (distant glass curtain walls; near side dominated by carts)	Level 3 (temporary boards and banners; high visual noise)	Edge zone occupied by continuous bands of e-bikes + tricycles; pedestrian space compressed to ~3–4 m.
WX-P1-A3_003	SL	FE	GM-S	Park entrance axis with landscape light poles; activity tent at the terminus (likely temporary sales/event point); no rule notice.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (tent blocks sightlines; closed drapes visible)	Level 2 (event signage unified but oversized)	Tent fully occupies the central axis; detour via lawn; pedestrian bottleneck with passable width ~1.5 m.
WX-P1-A4_001	SL	OV	GM-S	Nighttime dining street: both sides are restaurants; no explicit vending redline or management board.	90 m	~90%	Level 1 (large windows + outdoor dining; activities highly visible)	Level 3 (bright dense signage; mixed fonts/color blocks)	Vehicle parking + motorbikes + large outdoor canopies occupy former vehicular/pedestrian bands; effective walking width <1.5 m.
WX-P1-B1_001	KN	P	GM-R	Plaza edge with temporary dining kiosks and small shops; likely property-managed; no urban-management or governmental info boards observed.	15 m	~40%	Level 2 (kiosks partly open; many shutters closed)	Level 2 (signboard specs largely unified; strong color contrast)	Plaza center largely open; sporadic e-bike stops in front of kiosks; limited interference.
WX-P1-B2_001	MS	-	IF-OP	Large-facility entrance: speed-limit signs, deceleration markings, and guard booth; traffic/security governance rules explicit.	30 m	0%	Level 3 (walls + gates; little internal visibility)	Level 1 (standardized traffic/control signage)	Mainly vehicular management; no encroachment; pedestrian route is guided to detour, accessibility is average.
WX-P1-B2_002	SL	DC	GM-R	Sidewalk outside a sports center: site-plan board present but content is blank, indicating routine maintenance deficits.	80 m	0%	Level 3 (high fencing + dense hedges; closed visual interface)	Level 2 (frame remains; information missing; wayfinding fails)	Vegetation slightly encroaches into the sidewalk (~0.5 m); tactile paving is continuous but locally affected.
WX-P1-B2_003	MS	FE	IF-OP	Corner green-space rest node in an office area: paths separated from vehicles; small vertical sign provides minimal guidance.	10 m	~10%	Level 2 (lower public space open but shaded by trees)	Level 1 (small wayfinding sign; restrained information)	Rest area is set back within green space; clear sidewalk width; no encroachment or conflicts.
WX-P2-1_001	MS	OV	IF-OP	Drop-off area in front of a metro station: tactile paving, bollards, and curbs; delivery e-bikes cluster, but no formal management sign.	~40 m	~20%	Level 2 (podium/entrances have glazing, but fences and parked vehicles occlude)	Level 2 (metro wayfinding + temporary ads; acceptable but not fully unified)	Shared e-bikes line the curb space; within bollards the clear pedestrian width is ~2.5 m (two-way possible) but sightlines are cluttered.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WX-P2-1_002	MS	FE	IF-OP	Both sides of an urban arterial lined with high-rise residences; continuous central guardrails and lighting; governance emphasis on vehicular safety.	~150 m	0%	Level 3 (closed interface formed by facades + fences; no street-level interaction)	Level 3 (large real-estate banners on buildings; strong impact on skyline/interface)	Vehicular order is good; no pedestrian encroachment; however, central railings fully block mid-block crossing, forcing detours to intersections.
WX-P2-2_001	SL	OV	GM-R	Enclosed utility/facility building: walls + retractable gate + no-parking yellow grid; self-managed unit space, with no public-facing rule disclosure.	~30 m	0%	Level 3 (wall backing the street; internal activity largely invisible)	Level 2 (few unit plaques/warning signs; standardized and limited)	Raised green slope compresses the sidewalk; corner leaves only ~1.5 m clear width; wheelchair detourability is limited.
WX-P2-2_002	KN	FE	IF-OP	Waste-sorting collection point: canopy, sorting guide signs, and multi-color bins; explicit sanitation governance and responsibility zoning.	0 m	0%	Level 2 (semi-open; sorting facilities visible; partially occluded by greenery/hoarding)	Level 2 (unified waste-sorting wayfinding; large green panels feel visually oppressive)	Facility set back in green strip and does not occupy the main path; when collection vehicles stop briefly, the forecourt narrows to ~2 m.
WX-P2-3_001	MS	FE	GM-R	Large commercial/cultural complex facade with multiple leasing banners; no normal operation information or public management arrangement.	~120 m	~10%	Level 2 (original glazing remains, but dense diagonal grilles/greenery occlude)	Level 3 (multiple leasing banners with inconsistent sizes/colors; some damaged; uncontrolled interface)	Building is set back behind greenery/hoarding; no encroachment, but extensive inactive frontage produces a “visual vacancy zone.”
WX-P2-3_002	MS	FE	IF-OP	Large residential compound “Guangyuan Huaifu”: continuous wall + gatehead; governance relies on property-based enclosure management.	~150 m	0%	Level 3 (walls + high-rise blocks form hard boundary; no street-level visible activity)	Level 3 (many building-scale real-estate banners; strong color blocks; weak overall control)	Compound retreats behind walls; no encroachment; carriageway and green belt are clearly separated, but street staying/lingering is extremely weak.
WX-P2-4_001	MS	FE	GM-R	Small sanitation/management room: sanitation staff work observed with a service tricycle; municipal service point with no public-facing guidance.	~15 m	0%	Level 3 (solid wall + small windows; limited interior visibility; back-of-house)	Level 1 (almost no ads; possibly a small unit plaque)	Building sits in a central green setback; service vehicles stop behind hedges; limited impact on main pedestrian/vehicular corridors.
WX-P2-5_001	KN	-	IF-OP	Park internal public-civility sign “Civilized and Healthy, Green and Environmentally Friendly”: routine behavior guidance and environmental governance.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (standalone sign; not an interactive interface; minor grass-view occlusion)	Level 1 (unified public-welfare signage system; controlled form)	Placed at lawn edge; does not occupy main path; only slight partitioning in local leisure area.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WX-P2-5_002	KN	-	IF-OP	"Park Entry Rules" board: detailed prohibited behaviors and opening hours; governance rules are explicit.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (single-sided information board; limited visual impact)	Level 1 (standard governmental-style board; unified layout and norms)	Located on grass; no direct interference; but sits in a sight corridor and slightly fractures landscape continuity.
WX-P2-5_003	MS	FE	IF-OP	Near intersection: accessibility signage and crosswalk; large e-bike parking inside guardrails; governance is primarily facility-based.	0 m	0%	Level 3 (greenery + railings dominate; no visible building activity)	Level 1 (standardized accessibility/traffic signage; no commercial signs)	Non-motor vehicles line one side near the ramp; ~1.8 m pedestrian clear width remains; turning sight distance is somewhat reduced.
WX-P2-6_001	MS	FE	GM-R	Temporary construction hoarding with civility messaging and governmental slogans: transitional governance interface.	45 m	0%	Level 3 (fully closed hoarding; no interior visibility)	Level 1 (unified governmental 宣传 graphics)	Temporary parking in front reduces pedestrian continuity, but no clear bottleneck forms.
WX-P2-6_002	SL	OV	IF-OP	Interchange of an urban expressway and arterial: complete traffic guidance and street-name signage system.	120 m	0%	Level 3 (road/green separation; no interface interaction)	Level 1 (standardized traffic signage)	Vehicular scale dominates; pedestrian crossing distance is long; functional conflict exists but no encroachment.
WX-P2-6_003	SL	OV	GM-R	Fitness facilities outside a park: fence defines boundary; public-service governance.	60 m	0%	Level 3 (fence + greenery occlude; activities not directly interfaceable)	Level 1 (no commercial signs; facility instructions only)	Fence is set back; no substantive sidewalk encroachment.
WX-P2-6_004	KN	DC	GM-R	Temporary commercial box unit, likely a centralized managed point; lacks explicit institutional disclosure.	8 m	~20%	Level 2 (single opening; interior visible but interaction limited)	Level 3 (layered signs; mixed typography/colors)	Box occupies hard plaza paving, compressing the movement path and requiring detours.
WX-P2-6_005	MS	OV	IF-OP	Intersection construction hoarding combined with signals and warning facilities: governance during engineering phase.	55 m	0%	Level 3 (fully enclosed)	Level 1 (engineering and traffic standardized signage)	Pedestrians must detour around barriers; walking route is lengthened.
WX-P3-A1_001	MS	FE	GM-R	High-rise residential podium retail: the property management undertakes unified tenant recruitment/leasing, but lacks street-level governance signage.	70 m	~70%	Level 1 (large glazed display windows; interior activity clear)	Level 3 (dense retail signs; style uncontrolled)	Roadside parking + e-bikes overlap; sidewalk clear width ~1.5 m.
WX-P3-A1_002	MS	P	IF-OP	Continuation of the same residential segment; governance logic primarily property-controlled.	90 m	~60%	Level 1 (continuous display frontage)	Level 3 (highly competitive commercial identifiers)	Mixed parking of motor and non-motor vehicles; sustained conflicts.

Photo ID	Node Type	Shot Type	Governance Mode	Governance Evidence	Facade Continuity	Active Frontage	Transparency	Signage Control	Encroachment / Bottleneck / Conflict
WX-P3-A2_003	-	DC	IF-OP	Arterial-scale urban space: signals and central separation complete.	150 m	0%	Level 3 (pure transport interface)	Level 1 (traffic-system signage)	Pedestrians must rely on signals to cross; no encroachment but weak walk accessibility.
WX-P3-N1_001	MS	OV	IF-OP	Landmark cluster in a new district: landscape-oriented governance; lacks street-level institutional expression.	110 m	0%	Level 3 (buildings set back behind greenery)	Level 1 (restrained building identifiers)	Overscaled space; sparse pedestrian activity; no direct conflicts.
WX-P3-N1_002	SL	DC	GM-S	Nighttime temporary vendor concentration area: likely tacit governance (temporal + spatial tolerance); no formal governance arrangements disclosed.	35 m	~80%	Level 1 (fully open stalls; production/consumption visible)	Level 3 (bright lightboxes; highly competitive typography/colors)	Stalls line both sides, occupying the original carriageway; passage compressed into a one-way slow corridor.
WX-P3-N1_003	MS	FE	GM-S	Across the arterial: street-facing retail + night-market stalls overlap, reflecting “commercial spillover + flexible nighttime governance.”	60 m	~90%	Level 1 (dual openness of shops + stalls)	Level 3 (retail signs + stall light signs stacked; no unified control)	Central green separation weakens lateral crossing; stall clustering causes crowd retention.
WX-P3-N1_004	SL	DC	GM-S	Community-level night market / wet-market hybrid: clear informal occupation; governance relies on tacit permission and self-organization.	50 m	~95%	Level 1 (ground stalls; interaction and transactions highly visible)	Level 3 (no systematic signage; temporary lighting + handwritten signs)	Sidewalk fully occupied; pedestrians, vendors, and non-motor vehicles are highly mixed, forming a persistent bottleneck.
WX-P3-N2_001	SL	OV	GM-R	Wide sidewalk with continuous tactile paving: infrastructure-based governance.	130 m	0%	Level 3 (road/greenery dominate the interface)	Level 1 (no commercial identifiers)	Ample pedestrian space; no encroachment or bottlenecks.

Plate 1. Wanxiu Village: Spatial Skeleton (1/2).



WXV-P1-1 001



WXV-P1-2 001



WXV-P1-2 002



WXV-P1-2 003



WXV-P1-2 004



WXV-P1-3 001

Plate 1. Wanxiu Village: Spatial Skeleton (2/2).



WXV-P1-4 001

Plate 2. Wanxiu Village: Visible Governance Artifacts (1/3).



WXV-P2-1 001



WXV-P2-2 001



WXV-P2-3 001



WXV-P2-3 002



WXV-P2-3 003



WXV-P2-3 004

Plate 2. Wanxiu Village: Visible Governance Artifacts (2/3).



WXV-P2-4 001



WXV-P2-4 002



WXV-P2-4 003



WXV-P2-4 004



WXV-P2-5 001



WXV-P2-5 002

Plate 2. Wanxiu Village: Visible Governance Artifacts (3/3).



WXV-P2-5 003



WXV-P2-5 004



WXV-P2-5 005



WXV-P2-5 006



WXV-P2-6 001



WXV-P2-6 002

Plate 3. Wanxiu Village: Core Interface Outcomes (1/3).



WXV-P3-A1 001



WXV-P3-A1 002



WXV-P3-A1 003



WXV-P3-A2 001



WXV-P3-A2 003



WXV-P3-A2 004

Plate 3. Wanxiu Village: Core Interface Outcomes (2/3).



WXV-P3-A3 001



WXV-P3-B1 001



WXV-P3-B1 002



WXV-P3-N1 001



WXV-P3-N1 002



WXV-P3-N1 003

Plate 3. Wanxiu Village: Core Interface Outcomes (3/3).



WXV-P3-N1 004



WXV-P3-N1 005

Plate 1. San Jie Liang Xiang: Spatial Skeleton (1/4).



TT-P1-A1 001



TT-P1-A1 002



TT-P1-A1 003



TT-P1-A1 004



TT-P1-A1 005



TT-P1-A1 006

Plate 1. San Jie Liang Xiang: Spatial Skeleton (2/4).



TT-P1-A2 001



TT-P1-A2 002



TT-P1-A2 003



TT-P1-A2 004



TT-P1-A2 005



TT-P1-A3 001

Plate 1. San Jie Liang Xiang: Spatial Skeleton (3/4).



TT-P1-A3 002



TT-P1-B1 001



TT-P1-B1 002



TT-P1-B1 003



TT-P1-N1 001



TT-P1-N1 002

Plate 1. San Jie Liang Xiang: Spatial Skeleton (4/4).



TT-P1-N1 003

Plate 2. San Jie Liang Xiang: Visible Governance Artifacts (1/2).



TT-P2-1 001



TT-P2-1 002



TT-P2-1 003



TT-P2-1 004



TT-P2-1 005



TT-P2-2 001

Plate 2. San Jie Liang Xiang: Visible Governance Artifacts (2/2).



TT-P2-2 002



TT-P2-2 003



TT-P2-2 004



TT-P2-5 001



TT-P2-5 002

Plate 3. San Jie Liang Xiang: Core Interface Outcomes (1/3).



TT-P3-01 001



TT-P3-01 002



TT-P3-02 002



TT-P3-02 003

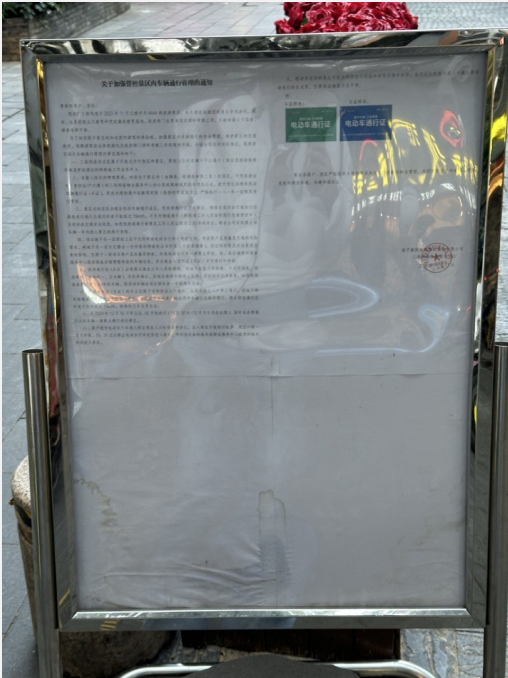


TT-P3-03 001



TT-P3-03 002

Plate 3. San Jie Liang Xiang: Core Interface Outcomes (2/3).



TT-P3-G2 001



TT-P3-G2 002



TT-P3-N1 001



TT-P3-N2 001

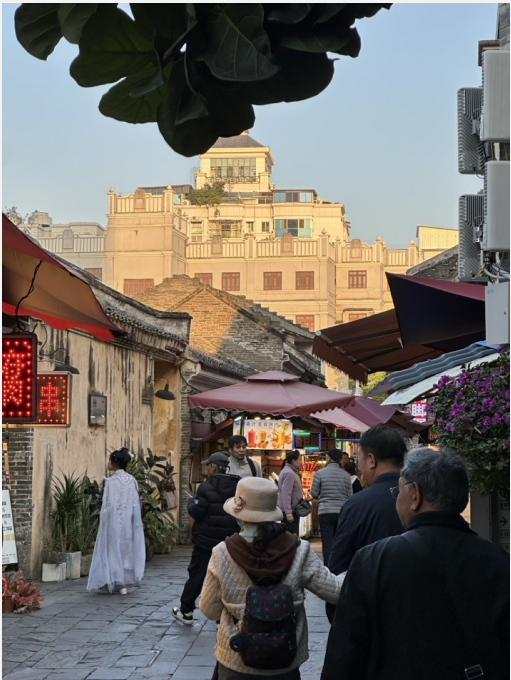


TT-P3-S1 001



TT-P3-S2 001

Plate 3. San Jie Liang Xiang: Core Interface Outcomes (3/3).



TT-P3-S2 002

Plate 1. Wuxiang New District: Spatial Skeleton (1/2).



WX-P1-A1 001



WX-P1-A2 001



WX-P1-A2 002



WX-P1-A3 001



WX-P1-A3 003

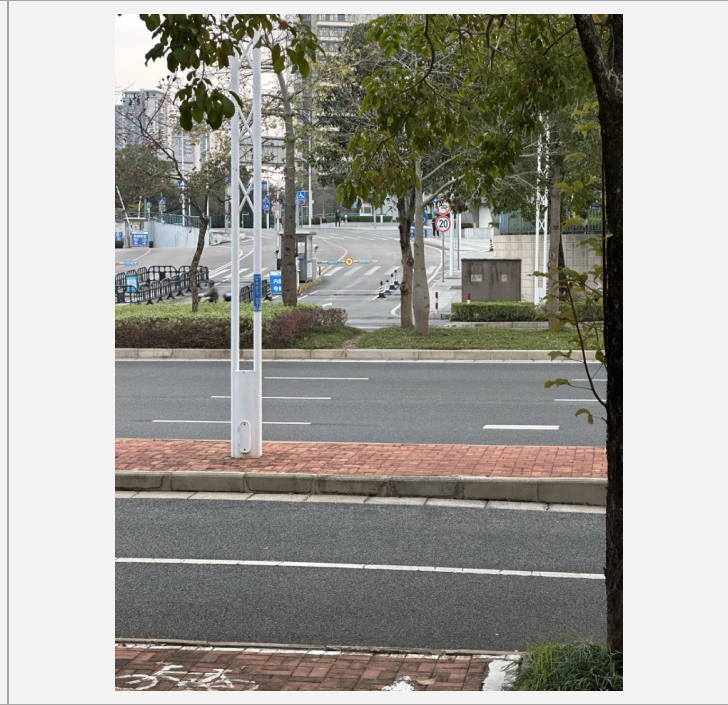


WX-P1-A4 001

Plate 1. Wuxiang New District: Spatial Skeleton (2/2).



WX-P1-B1 001



WX-P1-B2 001



WX-P1-B2 002



WX-P1-B2 003

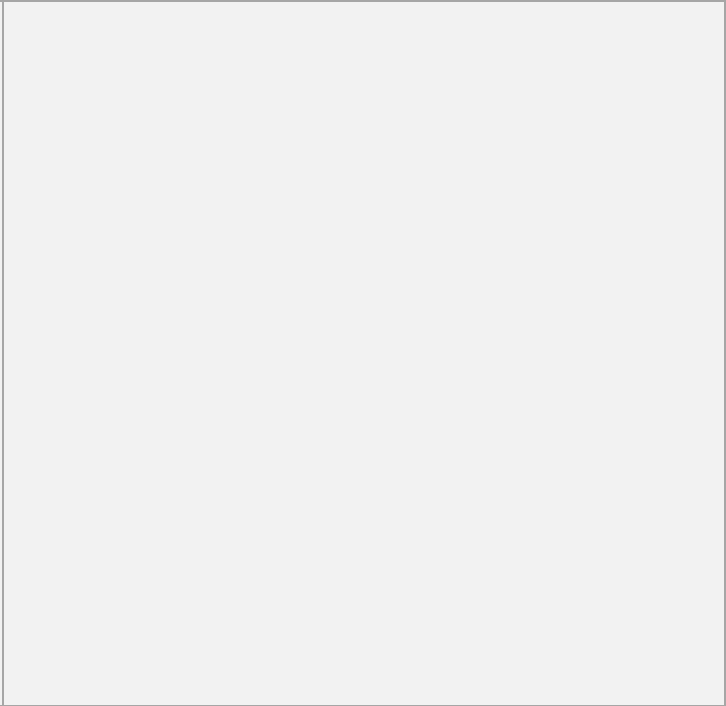
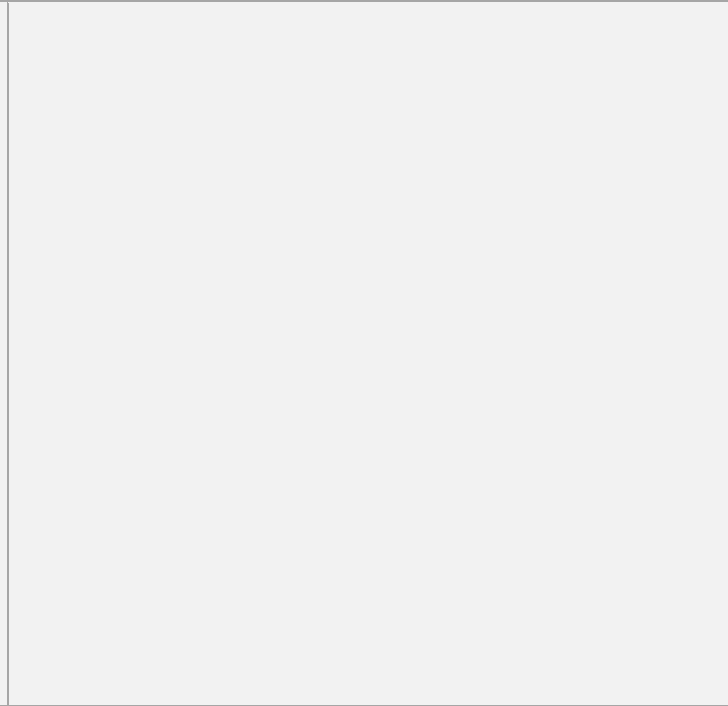


Plate 2. Wuxiang New District: Visible Governance Artifacts (1/3).



WX-P2-1 001



WX-P2-1 002



WX-P2-2 001



WX-P2-2 002



WX-P2-3 001



WX-P2-3 002

Plate 2. Wuxiang New District: Visible Governance Artifacts (2/3).



WX-P2-4 001



WX-P2-5 001



WX-P2-5 002



WX-P2-5 003



WX-P2-6 001



WX-P2-6 002

Plate 2. Wuxiang New District: Visible Governance Artifacts (3/3).

		
WX-P2-6 003	WX-P2-6 004	WX-P2-6 005

Plate 3. Wuxiang New District: Core Interface Outcomes (1/2).



WX-P3-A1 001



WX-P3-A1 002



WX-P3-A2 003



WX-P3-N1 001



WX-P3-N1 002



WX-P3-N1 003

Plate 3. Wuxiang New District: Core Interface Outcomes (2/2).



WX-P3-N1 004



WX-P3-N2 001

