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South China University of Technology

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兼具过去和未来：
汕头小公园开埠区谨慎城市更新的方式探索

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Balancing Past and Future:Exploring Prudent Urban Renewal Approaches in Shantou's Xiaogongyuan Historic Treaty Port District

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摘　　要

在全球化与城市化持续推进的背景下，老旧城区更新已成为城市发展中的重要议题。传统更新模式往往侧重于功能优化与经济效益提升，而忽视历史文化的延续性，导致部分历史街区在更新过程中逐渐失去其独特的空间特征与文化认同。在此背景下，如何在城市更新过程中协调历史保护与现代发展的关系，成为当前研究的重要方向。本文以汕头小公园历史街区为研究对象，在梳理城市记忆相关研究与德国城市更新实践的基础上，引入德国“谨慎城市更新”作为本文的设计立场与方法参照，并以城市记忆作为连接历史保护与空间更新的重要中介视角。

研究采用文献研究与实地调研相结合的方法，通过案例对比与理论分析，对谨慎城市更新理念在历史街区更新中的设计方法进行系统梳理。重点关注其在渐进式更新、历史环境保护与公众参与等方面的核心原则，并结合小公园片区公共空间的现状问题，从空间整合、功能优化与社会协同等多个层面提出相应的更新策略。在此基础上，结合多学科交叉研究方法，对汕头小公园核心片区开展更新设计实践，探索以公共空间为载体的历史街区活化路径。

研究表明，谨慎城市更新理念能够在避免大规模拆建的前提下，实现历史街区空间环境的渐进式改善与社会结构的稳定延续，为历史街区更新提供了一种更具可持续性的路径。同时，通过将城市记忆作为更新的重要价值导向，有助于在空间改造过程中强化历史文化的延续与场所认同，避免城市空间的同质化发展。综上所述，以谨慎城市更新为方法框架、以城市记忆延续为目标导向的更新路径，对于实现历史街区的保护与发展具有重要的理论意义与实践价值。汕头小公园作为潮汕地区具有代表性的历史街区，承载着丰富的城市遗产与集体记忆，其“繁荣—衰落—再复兴”的发展历程，使其更新研究具有较强的典型性与示范意义。

关键词：小公园；谨慎城市更新；城市记忆；城市遗产

ABSTRACT

Against the background of ongoing globalization and urbanization, the regeneration of old urban districts has become an important issue in contemporary urban development. Traditional renewal approaches have often focused on functional optimization and economic benefits while neglecting the continuity of historical culture, resulting in the gradual loss of unique spatial characteristics and cultural identity in many historic districts during the renewal process. In this context, how to balance historical preservation and modern urban development has become an important direction of current research. Taking the Xiaogongyuan Historic District in Shantou as the research object, this study introduces the German concept of "Prudent Urban Renewal" (Behutsame Stadterneuerung) as the design stance and methodological reference of the research, based on a review of studies related to urban memory and German urban renewal practices. At the same time, urban memory is regarded as an important intermediary perspective connecting historical preservation and spatial renewal.

This study combines literature review and field investigation methods. Through case comparison and theoretical analysis, it systematically examines the design approaches of prudent urban renewal in the regeneration of historic districts, with particular attention to its core principles of gradual renewal, historical environment preservation, and public participation. Combined with the existing problems of public spaces in the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district, corresponding renewal strategies are proposed from multiple aspects including spatial integration, functional optimization, and social coordination. On this basis, interdisciplinary research methods are adopted to carry out an urban renewal design practice for the core area of Xiaogongyuan, exploring a regeneration path for historic districts with public space as the main carrier.

The research shows that the concept of prudent urban renewal can achieve gradual improvement of the spatial environment and maintain the stability of social structures in historic districts while avoiding large-scale demolition and reconstruction, thus providing a more sustainable path for historic district regeneration. Meanwhile, by taking urban memory as an important value orientation in the renewal process, it becomes possible to strengthen the

continuity of historical culture and place identity during spatial transformation, thereby avoiding the homogenization of urban spaces. In conclusion, a renewal approach that takes prudent urban renewal as the methodological framework and the continuation of urban memory as the primary objective has important theoretical and practical significance for balancing preservation and development in historic districts. As a representative historic district in the Chaoshan region, Xiaogongyuan carries rich urban heritage and collective memory. Its developmental trajectory of “prosperity–decline–revitalization” also makes it a highly representative and exemplary case for historic district renewal research.

Keywords: Xiaogongyuan; Prudent Urban Renewal; Urban Memory; Historic District

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Motivation

1.1.1 Research Background

Against the backdrop of ongoing global urbanization and a gradual shift in urban development toward the renewal of existing stock, the revitalization of old urban districts has become a critical issue in contemporary urban development. In China, the concept of “urban renewal” was first introduced at the 2019 Central Economic Work Conference and was formally incorporated into the 2021 Government Work Report and the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development [1], marking the elevation of urban renewal to a national-level development strategy.The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China further proposed implementing urban renewal initiatives, strengthening urban infrastructure, and promoting the construction of livable, resilient, and smart cities. As urban development models have gradually shifted from rapid expansion to refined governance and the optimization of existing stock [2], the renewal of historic districts has also evolved from purely physical renovation to more comprehensive issues of spatial, cultural, and social governance.

However, for a considerable period in the past, traditional urban renewal has often prioritized economic benefits, land development, and functional upgrades, while paying insufficient attention to the preservation of the historical environment, local culture, and the continuity of social relationships.In this process, while some historic districts have undergone spatial transformation and Fig renewal, they simultaneously face issues such as the destruction of historical fabric, the breakdown of community ties, and the weakening of local culture. Some renewal projects have even gradually evolved into spatial production models dominated by tourism consumption and landscape display, leading to a tendency toward homogenization in urban spaces. Consequently, how to strike a balance between urban modernization and the preservation of historical and cultural heritage has gradually become a central issue in current research on historic district renewal.

Against this backdrop, urban memory theory has begun to offer new perspectives for the study of historic districts. Centered on collective memory and historical space [3], urban

memory theory emphasizes that urban space is not merely a collection of physical environments but also carries the long-established life experiences, local identities, and social relationships of residents. Compared to a focus solely on the historical preservation of buildings themselves, urban memory places greater emphasis on the enduring emotional connections between people and space, as well as the continuity of everyday life scenarios.Consequently, urban memory not only constitutes a vital foundation for the value of historic districts but also serves as a crucial bridge connecting historical preservation with spatial renewal. During the renewal of historic districts, urban memory helps re-examine the cultural significance embodied in streets, squares, arcades, and community life, thereby preventing renewal efforts from remaining merely superficial restorations of appearance while neglecting the continuity of authentic daily life and local identity.

At the same time, as the problems of modernist “demolition and reconstruction” renewal models have become increasingly apparent, urban renewal methods emphasizing incremental renewal and historical continuity have gradually gained attention. Among these, Germany’s “prudent Urban Renewal” (Behutsame Stadterneuerung) is a concept that has evolved over long-term urban renewal practice.At its core, this approach emphasizes the renewal of historic districts through incremental, small-scale, and consultative spatial interventions built upon the existing urban fabric, establishing a dynamic balance between preserving the historic environment, maintaining community structures, and responding to contemporary living needs. Compared to renewal methods dominated by wholesale reconstruction, “prudent Urban Renewal” places greater emphasis on historical continuity, public participation, and social equity; its focus lies not in creating entirely new urban forms, but in sustaining urban life within the existing historic context.From this perspective, there is a strong intrinsic connection between urban memory and prudent urban renewal. Urban memory emphasizes the continuity of social relationships and local identity within historic districts, while prudent renewal provides the spatial and social foundation for this continuity through incremental renewal, minimal intervention, and multi-stakeholder consultation.Therefore, in this study, urban memory serves not only as a value-oriented perspective but also as a crucial intermediary linking the practical challenges of the Xiaogongyuan Historic District with the design principles of prudent urban renewal. The

preservation and transmission of urban memory play a vital role in enhancing urban cultural identity, fostering residents' sense of belonging, and strengthening social cohesion[4] .

Against this backdrop, this paper takes the Shantou Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area as its research subject. From the perspective of urban memory and drawing on the principles of incremental renewal and consultative mechanisms emphasized in Germany's approach to prudent urban renewal, it conducts a comprehensive study of the spatial, cultural, and social relationships involved in the renewal of historic districts. By exploring a renewal pathway that balances historical preservation with the needs of contemporary life[5] , this study aims to provide new directions for thought and practical references for current research on historic district renewal in China.

1.1.2 Research Background

Born and raised in Shantou, the author has witnessed the transformation of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan from a period of demolition, construction, abandonment, and decline to its current stage of initial revitalization. Having visited Xiaogongyuan numerous times during this period, the author holds a special affection for the area.

Currently, the restoration and renewal of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area remain in their early stages. Constrained by objective factors such as project timelines and funding, the primary tasks completed to date have focused on: the restoration and beautification of the facades along the main arcade streets; the micro-renovation of the Shunchang District in the southern part of the core area; and the addition of numerous public spaces.

However, systematic research and integration of the overall public spaces within certain areas remain relatively insufficient.At the same time, the outdoor activity spaces within the vast majority of neighborhoods and the living environments within residential blocks have yet to be effectively improved. Although micro-renovations have been carried out in certain areas, the author's field visits revealed that the results of these renovations are unsatisfactory. These spaces fail to create inviting areas for people to linger, resulting in a phenomenon of "superficial renewal" similar to the improvements made to street-facing facades. This approach struggles to fundamentally address the practical living needs of local residents and

fails to drive the overall revitalization of the historic district.

On the other hand, many arcade districts in China currently exhibit a pronounced tendency toward uniformity in their renewal processes; the excessive introduction of commercial development has, to some extent, diluted the original historical atmosphere and cultural characteristics of these traditional districts. In contrast, the Shantou Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area Historic District possesses distinct uniqueness in terms of spatial form and historical context.From an architectural perspective, the district's building forms embody the fusion of Chaozhou-Shantou local culture and Western architectural styles[6] ; from an urban planning perspective, its external public spaces form a relatively complete network structure, making it highly representative among the arcaded districts of the Lingnan region. Therefore, in the process of advancing restoration and renewal, in addition to the reasonable protection and reuse of historic buildings, further efforts should be made to strengthen the overall research and integration of the district's public space system, thereby exploring and perpetuating the historical and cultural significance and regional characteristics embodied by Shantou's Xiaogongyuan from a holistic perspective.

1.2 Research Objectives and Significance

1.2.1 Research Objectives

This study takes the conservation and renewal of the Xiaogongyuan Historic District in Shantou as its research background, focusing on the integration and optimization of public space systems within the renewal process of historic districts. The arcade district of Xiaogongyuan is characterized by a radial spatial structure centered on the Zhongshan Memorial Pavilion, a spatial form that is highly distinctive and representative among arcade districts in China. In recent years, the Xiaogongyuan area has gradually carried out arcade restoration, public space construction, and localized micro-renewal projects, resulting in certain improvements to the historic character and overall district image. However, current renewal efforts are still mainly concentrated on localized areas and individual nodes, while further integration and optimization are still needed in terms of public space continuity, internal alley vitality, spatial hierarchy, and the daily living environment within the district. Therefore, this study attempts to explore a more balanced and sustainable renewal approach

between historical preservation and contemporary urban development.

The research focuses on the public spaces within the core area of Xiaogongyuan. Based on a review of studies related to historic district renewal, urban memory, and German prudent urban renewal, combined with field investigation and case analysis, the study systematically examines the historical evolution, spatial structure, and existing problems of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district. The research does not remain limited to the restoration of historical appearance itself, but instead explores a gradual renewal path for the Xiaogongyuan Historic District from the perspectives of urban memory continuation, public space integration, and the recovery of everyday urban life.

On this basis, the study selects the Nansheng Department Store block as the design practice site, taking German prudent urban renewal as a renewal position and methodological reference. Drawing upon its approaches of gradual renewal, minimal intervention, and multi-stakeholder coordination, the study proposes a phased spatial integration strategy to optimize the internal public spaces, pedestrian systems, and functional structure of the district. Through this process, the research attempts to establish a historic district renewal path that balances the continuation of historical context, public space revitalization, and contemporary living needs, while also providing reference for the renewal of historic districts in China with similar spatial characteristics and historical backgrounds.

1.2.2 Significance of the Study

The Xiaogongyuan Historic District in Shantou is an important witness to the modern urban development of Shantou and one of the most representative historic and cultural districts in the Chaoshan region. The district preserves a relatively complete arcade building complex and a radial street pattern, which together reflect the historical integration of Chaoshan regional culture and modern port-commercial culture. In recent years, the Xiaogongyuan area has gradually carried out arcade restoration, public space construction, and localized micro-renewal projects, resulting in the partial recovery of the district's historic character and transforming it into an important spatial carrier for urban cultural display and tourism development in Shantou.

However, with the advancement of the renewal process, the district still faces problems

such as insufficient integration of the public space system, weak vitality of internal alleys, reduced spatial hierarchy, and limited improvement of residents' everyday living spaces. Existing renewal efforts are mainly concentrated on localized nodes and key street interfaces, while systematic research on the relationships between internal public space networks, everyday living spaces, and the continuation of urban memory within the historic district remains relatively insufficient. Therefore, how to further achieve public space integration, the restoration of everyday life, and the continuation of historical context while preserving the historic character has become an important issue in the renewal of the Xiaogongyuan Historic District.

Based on this context, this study approaches the issue from the perspective of urban memory, taking German prudent urban renewal as a renewal position and methodological reference, with a focus on the gradual integration of internal public space systems within historic districts. The significance of this research lies not only in the preservation of historic buildings and spatial character, but also in exploring how public space renewal can reconstruct spatial connections, everyday vitality, and local identity within the district, thereby avoiding the tendency for historic district renewal to gradually shift toward purely scenic and tourism-oriented development.

At the same time, this study takes the Nansheng Department Store block as the design practice site and systematically integrates public spaces, pedestrian systems, and functional structures through a phased renewal strategy. The research attempts to establish a historic district renewal path that balances historical preservation, spatial revitalization, and contemporary living needs. The results of this study may not only provide reference for the future renewal of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district, but also offer useful insights for the renewal of arcade districts in China with similar spatial forms and historical backgrounds.

1.2.3 Scope and Subject of the Study

Shantou's Xiaogongyuan, the commercial and cultural center of Shantou's old city, serves as a core landmark and cultural symbol of the historic city. In a narrow sense, Xiaogongyuan refers to the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion located at the heart of the district. In a broader sense, it encompasses the neighborhoods surrounding the pavilion, including

Anping Road, Shengping Road, Guoping Road, and others, collectively known as the Xiaogongyuan Historical and Cultural District.The arcades and streets of the Xiaogongyuan area are largely modeled after Parisian urban layouts, radiating out in a fan-shaped pattern. Together with the historic neighborhoods of “Si Yong Yi Shengping” on both sides, the former “Yantengtou” to the east, Hongting to the north, and “Shantou Port” to the south, they form a bustling commercial and residential district characterized by 1930s architectural features.

The core area of Xiaogongyuan is centered on Zhongshan Pavilion Square, with multiple main thoroughfares featuring arcades radiating outward from this node, enclosing and forming several block units (Fig 1-1). Along these arcaded streets are distributed urban public space nodes of varying scales, serving as important gathering places within the neighborhood.In addition to the public spaces along the main thoroughfares, a significant number of small-scale public spaces are also distributed within the neighborhoods. These are interconnected with the main thoroughfares through a dense network of streets and alleys, forming a multi-layered spatial system. Given the diverse types of public spaces in the area and their close structural connections, this study adopts a holistic perspective to conduct a comprehensive analysis of their spatial structure and interrelationships in a systematic manner.

(1) Delimitation of the Study Area

According to the “Protection Plan for the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area of the Shantou Special Economic Zone” published in 2016, the Xiaogongyuan area has been designated as protection zones of varying levels. This paper will take the core protection zone as its basis and select the historic district centered on the Xiaogongyuan Pavilion, within a radius of approximately 350 meters, as the primary subject of study (see Figs 1–2).Due to historical development factors, several modern residential complexes and school sites remain scattered within this area. These plots exhibit distinct spatial textures compared to the traditional historic district; they predominantly feature enclosed courtyard layouts with weak connections to the surrounding street-level public spaces, and their spatial attributes are largely private or semi-private in nature. Therefore, this study excludes such spaces from the scope of its public space analysis.Based on this research framework, the author selected the Nansheng Department Store block for design analysis. Drawing on Germany’s “Prudent

Urban Renewal" approach, while acknowledging the unique characteristics of China's "urban renewal" context[8] , the study conducts a combined design analysis. Based on a comprehensive study and analysis of Xiaogongyuan, the author attempts an urban renewal transformation of the site, conducting both horizontal and vertical comparisons with the current Xiaogongyuan project. This approach proposes new possibilities within the context of China's urban renewal history[9] , this paper proposes new possibilities.



Fig.1 -1 Overall layout of Shantou's Xiao Park

(Source: "Protection Plan for the Shantou Special Economic Zone Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area")



Fig.1 -2 Location of the Shantou Xiaoguan Park Historic and Cultural District

(Source: Redrawn from Google Maps)

(2) Definition of the Research Subject

This paper focuses primarily on urban public spaces within the study area. Specifically, this includes open spaces with functions for lingering and resting, such as urban gathering squares, plazas in front of major public buildings, and urban parks and green spaces. It also encompasses linear spaces that serve transportation and public activity functions, such as arcaded streets and alleys within neighborhoods.Most of these spaces are outdoor or semi-outdoor environments open to the public year-round. They serve as vital venues for public life in historic districts and are crucial sites for the preservation and expression of urban memory.This paper not only examines the spatial form and usage patterns of public spaces themselves but also pays appropriate attention to the interface relationships and interactive connections between public spaces and surrounding private or semi-private spaces. For example, the internal spaces of certain schools and residential sites within the study area are of a closed or semi-open nature, primarily serving specific groups and not open to the public; therefore, they are not considered the primary research subjects of this paper. However, their impact on the surrounding spatial environment will be appropriately taken into account when analyzing the structure of public spaces.On this basis, this paper will systematically organize and classify the types of public spaces within the study area and select representative spatial nodes for in-depth analysis. Meanwhile, drawing on theories of urban memory, it will explore pathways for the revitalization and renewal of public spaces in historic districts within contemporary urban life. Ultimately, it will examine the public space network structure and spatial organizational relationships of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district from a holistic perspective.

1.3 Core Concepts of the Study

1.3.1 Xiaogongyuan

As a place name, “Xiaogongyuan” has both a narrow and a broad interpretation[10] .In the narrow sense, “Xiaogongyuan” refers to the Xiaogongyuan Pavilion at the intersection of Shengping Road, Anping Road, and Guoping Road in Shantou’s old city center. Since the site was a circular street-side park before the pavilion was built, and to distinguish it from the “Grand Park”—Shantou Zhongshan Park, which opened in 1928—local residents colloquially call it Xiaogongyuan.In a broader sense, “Xiao Park” (that is, Shantou’s old city district)

refers to the area of radial streets centered on the Xiao Park Pavilion. From the opening of Shantou as a treaty port until the 1980s, this area served as Shantou's sole urban center.In July 2016, the Shantou Urban and Rural Planning Bureau drafted the "Protection Plan for the Shantou Special Economic Zone's Small Park Port Opening Area," designating the area within the Small Park district that preserves a wealth of artifacts from the port opening period, features a concentrated cluster of historic buildings, and can relatively completely and authentically reflect the historical and cultural character of the port opening period as the Small Park Port Opening Area.The area is bounded by Xidi Road to the west, the Xigang Elevated Road–Zhongshan West Road to the north, Fuping Road–Zhangyuan Inner Street–Wai Ma Road–Zhaoshang Road to the east, and Zhaoshang Heng Road–Wai Ma Road–Shangping Road–Zhiping Road–Haidian Inner Street–Mian'an Street–Zhenbang Road to the south, with a total area of 72.43 hectares.

1.3.2 Prudent Urban Renewal

"Prudent Urban Renewal" (Behutsame Stadterneuerung) first emerged in the 1970s and 1980s against the backdrop of Germany's reflection on modernist urban renewal models. Its core is not an urban design theory with a clear paradigm or fixed model, but rather a set of values and practical methods that gradually took shape in response to the challenges of renewing historic urban districts.Because the term is often directly translated as "model" in the Chinese context, it is easily misunderstood as a design theory with a unified methodology and standardized operational system. In reality, however, the term "prudent" itself emphasizes an attitude toward renewal: adopting a restrained, incremental, and consultative approach when confronting complex historical environments and social relationships.

Conceptually, the emergence of "Prudent Urban Renewal" is closely linked to the large-scale demolition and reconstruction projects that characterized post-war urban renewal in Germany. From the 1950s to the 1970s, under the influence of modernist planning ideology, numerous historic neighborhoods in Germany were demolished en masse and replaced with modern housing estates and transportation systems. While this approach improved infrastructure and housing conditions, it also led to the destruction of the historic environment, the breakdown of community ties, and the homogenization of urban spaces.Particularly in cities like Berlin, traditional high-density neighborhoods and residents' social networks were rapidly dismantled during the renewal process, sparking widespread social controversy.

Consequently, “Prudent Urban Renewal” is not merely a new design approach focused on spatial form, but rather a correction to the “complete demolition—total reconstruction” logic, with its emphasis on reestablishing a balanced relationship among historical preservation, residents’ livelihoods, and urban development.

Compared to traditional modernist renewal, prudent urban renewal places greater emphasis on “continuity” rather than “replacement.” Its core focus is not on creating entirely new urban spaces, but on how to achieve sustained improvements based on the existing urban fabric. This “continuity” encompasses not only the preservation of the spatial texture of historic neighborhoods but also the continuity of social structures, daily life, and community relationships.Consequently, prudent renewal typically adopts an incremental, small-scale approach, advancing renewal gradually through strategies such as restoration, patching, adaptive reuse, and public space improvements, rather than achieving spatial reconfiguration through a one-time, comprehensive overhaul.

Prudent urban renewal also exhibits distinct process-oriented characteristics. It does not emphasize planners unilaterally determining the final spatial outcome but instead focuses on the negotiation between different stakeholders throughout the renewal process. In this process, the government is responsible for establishing the basic framework for historic preservation and public interest; designers respond to spatial needs within existing regulatory conditions; and residents and users continuously influence the direction of renewal through participatory negotiation. Consequently, prudent renewal is not a fixed design outcome but rather a dynamically generated renewal process.

From a broader perspective, the significance of prudent urban renewal extends beyond the practice of historic district preservation in Germany; it actually represents a re-evaluation of modern urban renewal approaches. By emphasizing incremental renewal, public participation, historical continuity, and social equity, it shifts urban renewal from a purely physical construction endeavor toward a more comprehensive process of social governance.Consequently, “prudent urban renewal” is best understood as a stance toward urban renewal, a design methodology, and a set of values, rather than a closed theoretical system.

In terms of its developmental trajectory[11] , this concept has generally undergone two

phases. The first phase, marked by the 1984 International Building Exhibition (IBA) in Berlin, centered on the core concept of “the inner city as a place to live.” It emphasized the preservation of historic buildings and existing neighborhood structures at the physical level, the maintenance of original residents and community relationships at the social level, and the achievement of a more democratic renewal process through expanded public participation.The second phase emerged after German reunification. Building on the original principles, it placed greater emphasis on integrating physical environment improvements with social governance during urban renewal, while encouraging the participation of diverse stakeholders—including private investors, homeowners, and resident-led self-renovation initiatives. Overall, “Prudent Urban Renewal” emphasizes achieving a balance between urban spatial improvement and social stability through incremental renewal, historic preservation, and public participation, thereby providing a significant theoretical framework for the preservation and renewal of historic districts.

1.3.3 Urban Memory

Both urban memory and collective memory refer to memories shared by members of a social group; they are public symbols that have been objectified through people’s social lives.Urban memory (City Memory) originates from collective memory (Collective Memory) and is a form of collective memory. It constitutes a complex dynamic system formed by the subjects of urban memory (those who remember) and the objects of urban memory (intangible and tangible memory elements) over time. It is continuously reconstructed and generated during its development, possessing both diachronic and synchronic characteristics.It is worth noting that the spatio-temporal scope of urban memory encompasses the macro-level of the city, the meso-level of communities/neighborhoods, and the micro-level of specific spaces. Among these, the subjects of urban memory are community residents and certain outsiders (such as tourists and visitors), while the objects of urban memory can be further categorized into cultural memory, spatial carriers, and spatial activities.As a form of collective memory, urban memory represents the unique attachment that city residents feel toward their city; it is a dynamic process of cognition and reconstruction of self-memory. The preservation of urban memory can effectively enhance the public’s understanding of the historical background and

urban context of their local area. In the field of architecture, architect Aldo Rossi posits that the city is a place of collective memory[12] .Compared to collective memory, the spatial characteristics of urban memory are more pronounced; urban memory unfolds according to spatial distribution and exists in every corner of the city's physical space, making urban space a place where memory and emotion intertwine.

In current academic research, the concept of urban memory has not yet been clearly defined. Due to the different disciplinary backgrounds of researchers, definitions of urban memory vary in emphasis. In the research of Western scholars, the concepts of collective memory, social memory, and urban memory are sometimes used interchangeably in certain discussions. From the perspectives of architecture and heritage conservation, the following views are prominent in defining urban memory: 1. Urban memory is not a static form of memory; it is a complex dynamic system.As time and space shift and dynamic spaces evolve, there is a degree of continuity and transmission; the urban memory system bears witness to these unique changes and the development of their content[13] . 2. Urban memory is encompassed within the concept of collective memory; it includes shared memories such as familiarity with historical events, spaces of special significance, and the atmosphere of daily life. Therefore, urban memory will vary depending on the different group activities and living environments of citizens[14] . 3. Urban memory can be understood as "a dynamic process through which social groups cognize and reconstruct their own environment in the context of urban activities." Cognition manifests as a subjective sense of self, while reconstruction emphasizes self-understanding within the dynamic process of urban memory[15] .

1.3.4 Urban Heritage

Cultural heritage represents the trajectory of a nation's or ethnic group's historical development and the memories of people's lives, constituting assets worthy of being passed down to future generations. In 1972, UNESCO adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in Paris, which classified heritage and established the internationally recognized concept of "Cultural Heritage": immovable cultural artifacts, architectural complexes, archaeological sites, etc. (similar to Japan's Tangible Cultural Properties).

The concept of “urban heritage” was first introduced in *The Old City and the New Architecture*, published in 1931. Prior to that, Giovannoni’s 1913 work of the same title served as a seminal text reflecting his theories on urban conservation.Although the term “urban heritage” was not explicitly introduced in that earlier work, it fully reflected his fundamental ideas on urban conservation. In the 1931 work—hailed as “Italy’s first modern urban planning treatise”—Giovanoni systematically expounded on the philosophy of urban conservation[16] , formally introducing it. Xiao Yi argues that “the concept of urban heritage was constructed in opposition to the mainstream process of urbanization; it is a dialectical outcome of history and historical authenticity.” Furthermore, Giovannoni’s advocated approach to urban design fused Ruskin’s romanticism with Camillo Sitte’s rationalism, seeking to integrate diverse social needs into a comprehensive design framework.

Simply put, urban heritage refers to the tangible cultural heritage within a city. The term “city” not only defines the geographical location of cultural heritage but also points to its multifaceted social attributes.“Urban heritage” can be understood as all historical buildings, cultural heritage districts, and historic cities within a city that possess architectural, aesthetic, historical, archaeological, economic, social, and even political value, as well as “emotional resonance and a sense of place.” It also includes traditional buildings, old residential areas, and commercial districts that have not yet been officially designated but still embody the distinctive character of the city.In addition to the city’s man-made built environment—such as structures, buildings, traditional activity sites, and historic forests—it also encompasses the natural built environment,such as ancient trees, “historic water bodies,” unique urban layouts, and the topography itself.” “Urban heritage” can be a living container closely linked to “people” socially or a tool for livelihood: buildings, residential settlements, historic streets, industrial zones, and even the historic and cultural cities themselves. It is a relatively narrow concept[17] . Indeed, it focuses more on the relationships among “heritage people” than on “heritage objects.”

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 Current State of Research on Prudent Urban Renewal

Existing research on “prudent urban renewal” primarily focuses on Germany’s urban

renewal systems, practices in historic district preservation, and insights for China's urban renewal. From a historical perspective, such studies generally situate the concept within the context of Germany's post-war urban renewal transformation, arguing that its emergence is closely linked to modernist planning, large-scale demolition-and-reconstruction projects, and public protest movements.In particular, case studies such as the Berlin International Building Exhibition, the Kreuzberg renewal, the 118th Block, and the Spandau suburb are frequently cited as key examples for understanding prudent renewal. Relevant research emphasizes that prudent renewal is not merely a method of architectural restoration, but rather a comprehensive approach that integrates historical preservation, social equity, housing security, resident participation, and incremental implementation.

In international research, prudent urban renewal is more frequently discussed within the context of German urban governance, social housing policies, historic district preservation, and public participation mechanisms. The focus of such studies is typically not limited to spatial forms themselves, but rather on the underlying institutional conditions, social policies, and governance structures.For example, public financial support, rent control, resident consultation, community organizations, and housing security mechanisms are considered essential prerequisites for the effective implementation of prudent urban renewal in Germany's historic districts. Such research indicates that the core of prudent urban renewal lies not merely in "minimizing demolition and construction," but in using institutional arrangements and social consultation to prevent issues such as the displacement of original residents, the commercial exploitation of the historic environment, and the disruption of community relationships during the urban renewal process.Domestic research on prudent urban renewal, however, has largely focused on case studies and methodological adaptation. On the one hand, some studies have analyzed Berlin's Old Town renewal case to summarize its experiences in incremental renewal, the reuse of historic buildings, the improvement of public spaces, resident participation, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. On the other hand, other studies have attempted to integrate these concepts with China's renovation of aging residential communities, the preservation of historic districts, micro-renewal, and urban renewal initiatives, exploring their applicability within the Chinese context.Overall, domestic research focuses more on the insights that "prudent renewal" offers for China's urban renewal

practices, particularly in terms of avoiding large-scale demolition and reconstruction, enhancing community participation, preserving historical character, and maintaining continuity of daily life—areas where it holds significant reference value.

However, existing research also has certain shortcomings. First, many studies still tend to present “prudent renewal” as a fixed, imported model, while failing to fully recognize its openness as a stance on renewal, a governance method, and a practical approach.Second, most relevant studies focus on summarizing German institutional experiences and typical case studies; there is still room for further exploration regarding how to translate these into concrete design methods, particularly in addressing the complex interplay between local culture, residents’ demands, and government regulation within China’s historic districts. Third, existing research offers relatively limited discussion on the relationship between prudent renewal and urban memory, local identity, and daily life, and rarely explains—from the perspective of memory continuity—why historic districts require incremental, consultative, and low-intervention renewal approaches.

Therefore, building upon existing research, this paper interprets prudent urban renewal as a design stance and renewal methodology tailored to complex historic districts. By introducing urban memory as an intermediary perspective, this paper attempts to further explore the applicability of prudent renewal in the Xiaogongyuan Historic District of Shantou—specifically, how to establish a dynamic balance among government heritage control, residents’ living needs, and market revitalization, and how to achieve the synergistic continuity of historical context, social life, and public space through incremental spatial interventions.

1.4.2 Current State of Research on Urban Memory and Sense of Place

As China’s urbanization accelerates, people seek a sense of belonging and identity in fast-paced urban life. Consequently, research on urban memory has shifted from an object-centered to a subject-centered approach, emphasizing the revitalization and transmission of urban memory. Research on urban memory and a sense of place has become a current focus, with the emergence of a sense of place depending on the interplay of three elements: the subjects of urban memory, its carriers, and the process of urban memory

formation.① Subjects of Urban Memory: The subject of memory is the individual; human perception and experience are the subjective factors in memory formation, and collective urban memory relies on the emotions generated at the subjective level of the individual. Zhao Xinshan (2002) et al. argue that urban space is a projection of personal emotions; Ma Dongjuan (2016) maintains that research on urban memory cannot be separated from the subject—the "individual." ② Carriers of Urban Memory: Material and immaterial carriers are the focus of research.Scholars have used cultural heritage (Zhang Huanzhou, 2015), industrial heritage (Lu Shaoming, 2012; Zhang Yajuan, 2018; Yan Fang, 2022), and museums (Wen Tong, 2019) as case studies, highlighting the crucial role that revitalization and transmission play in the process of constructing urban memory, thereby strengthening the sense of local identity among the human subjects.③ The process of urban memory involves the activation, awakening, construction (Qi Jianwu, 2022), and reinforcement of memory. Scholars such as Qian Lili (2015) argue that research on collective memory from a geographical perspective emphasizes the interactive mechanisms between memory subjects and carriers—that is, the study of human-environment relations—and constructs a research framework for urban collective memory from a geographical perspective.Through the spatio-temporal interaction between the subject and the object in the city, an emotional urban space is inevitably shaped, giving rise to a unique sense of place.

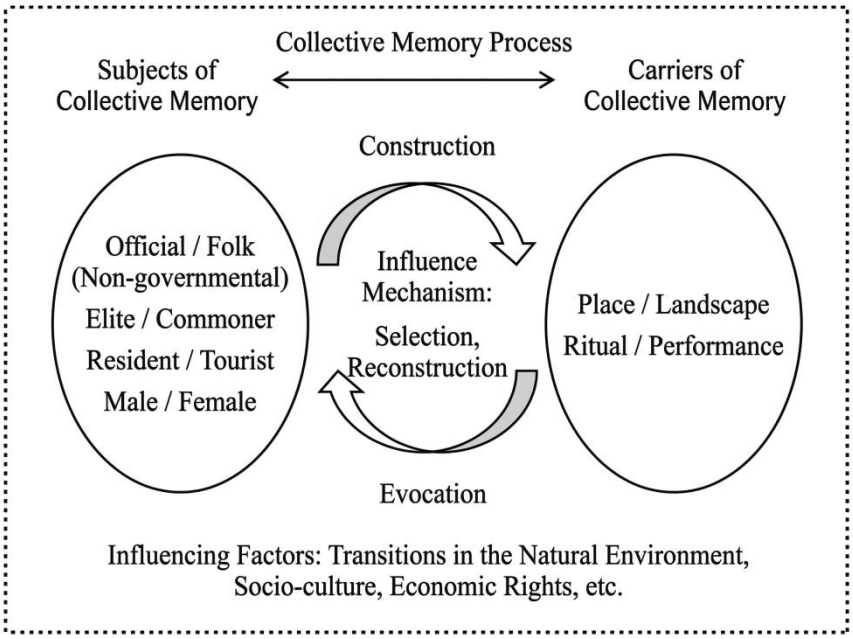


Fig.1 -3 Mechanism of Collective Memory

(Source: *Urban Memory and Urban Form*)

1.4.3 Current State of Research on Urban Heritage Theory

As the process of urbanization continues to advance, the protection of urban historical environments has gradually become a key issue in urban studies.Early heritage conservation focused primarily on the protection of individual historic or monumental buildings. For instance, the conservation principles outlined in the Athens Charter (1931) and the Venice Charter (1964) emphasized the authenticity and integrity of historic buildings. Research during this phase concentrated mainly on the restoration and preservation of the buildings themselves, with relatively little attention paid to the overall urban spatial environment and sociocultural factors.

In the latter half of the 20th century, as understanding of the historical value of cities deepened, the scope of heritage conservation research gradually expanded from individual buildings to historic districts and the overall urban environment.The concept of "Historic Urban Landscape" (HUL) proposed by UNESCO emphasizes the holistic protection and management of urban heritage within the broader context of urban development[18] , taking into account multifaceted factors such as historical spatial patterns, sociocultural traditions, and residents' lifestyles. This theory breaks through the limitations of traditional static conservation and places greater emphasis on the living transmission of urban heritage within contemporary urban development.

In China, with the establishment of the protection system for historic and cultural cities and the continuous advancement of urban renewal practices, research on urban heritage conservation has gradually gained prominence.Scholars have conducted research from various perspectives, including the preservation of historic districts, cultural landscapes, and urban memory, emphasizing the need to maintain historical continuity and preserve the distinctive characteristics of urban spaces[19] during urban renewal processes, while promoting the revitalization of historic districts through appropriate utilization. Overall, current research on urban heritage is gradually shifting from a focus on individual building preservation to comprehensive urban environmental conservation, with increased attention to issues such as cultural transmission, social participation, and sustainable development.

1.4.4 Current Status of Research on Shantou's Urban Transformation

As a coastal city, Shantou once developed a prosperous economy and a unique urban character based on port trade. However, with the decline of port functions and adjustments to the city's industrial structure, the traditional urban area has gradually lost its original economic vitality and now faces the following challenges in its transformation: functional decline and vacancy. Traditional trade activities have shrunk, commercial functions in some historic districts have declined, and vacant buildings and idle spaces have emerged.Spatial Deterioration and Outdated Infrastructure: Buildings in the old city have aged, and infrastructure has not been upgraded in a timely manner, failing to meet the demands of modern urban life[20] . Diminishing Cultural Value and Memory: The cultural symbols and historical memories of traditional neighborhoods are gradually being overlooked, and local characteristics and Chaozhou-Shantou cultural elements face the risk of being lost.Urgent Need for Urban Renewal As residents' demands for livable environments and cultural experiences rise, old urban districts urgently require functional restructuring and urban revitalization through cultural revitalization and spatial reuse. The core of urban transformation lies in preserving historical and cultural heritage while introducing new urban vitality through spatial renewal and mixed-use development, thereby reshaping a sense of place and urban memory.

1.5 Research Methods and Framework

1.5.1 Research Methods

This paper focuses on the public spaces of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district in Shantou. Through a combination of literature review and field research, it conducts a systematic analysis of the current issues and renewal strategies for the district's public spaces.During the research process, observations and analyses of the spatial form, usage patterns, and changes in vitality of the district's public spaces were conducted in conjunction with the actual progress of the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area restoration project. Simultaneously, by reviewing relevant theories and practical case studies on the preservation and renewal of historic districts both domestically and internationally, and applying systems theory, this study analyzes the causes behind the decline in the quality of public spaces and

the lack of spatial vitality in the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district. Based on this analysis, corresponding integrated design strategies are proposed. This study primarily employs the following research methods:

(1) Literature Review

By reviewing research findings on the preservation of historic districts, urban renewal, public space integration, and urban memory both domestically and internationally, and by collecting planning documents and research materials related to the Shantou Xiaoguan Park Port Opening Area, this study systematically examines the development background, spatial characteristics, and current status of preservation and renewal in the area. Through the synthesis of relevant theories and practical experiences, this research provides a theoretical foundation and methodological references for subsequent studies.

(2) Field Research Method

Through multiple field visits, the current state of buildings, the distribution of public spaces, and their usage patterns in the core area of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan were investigated and documented, thereby providing a more intuitive understanding of the preservation and utilization of public spaces in the area.The research primarily includes on-site observations, spatial documentation, and surveys of behavioral activities, supplemented by interviews with residents and visitors to understand their usage needs and activity patterns. Additionally, field visits to selected historical district renewal cases within China provide comparative references for subsequent research.

(3) Inductive Analysis Method

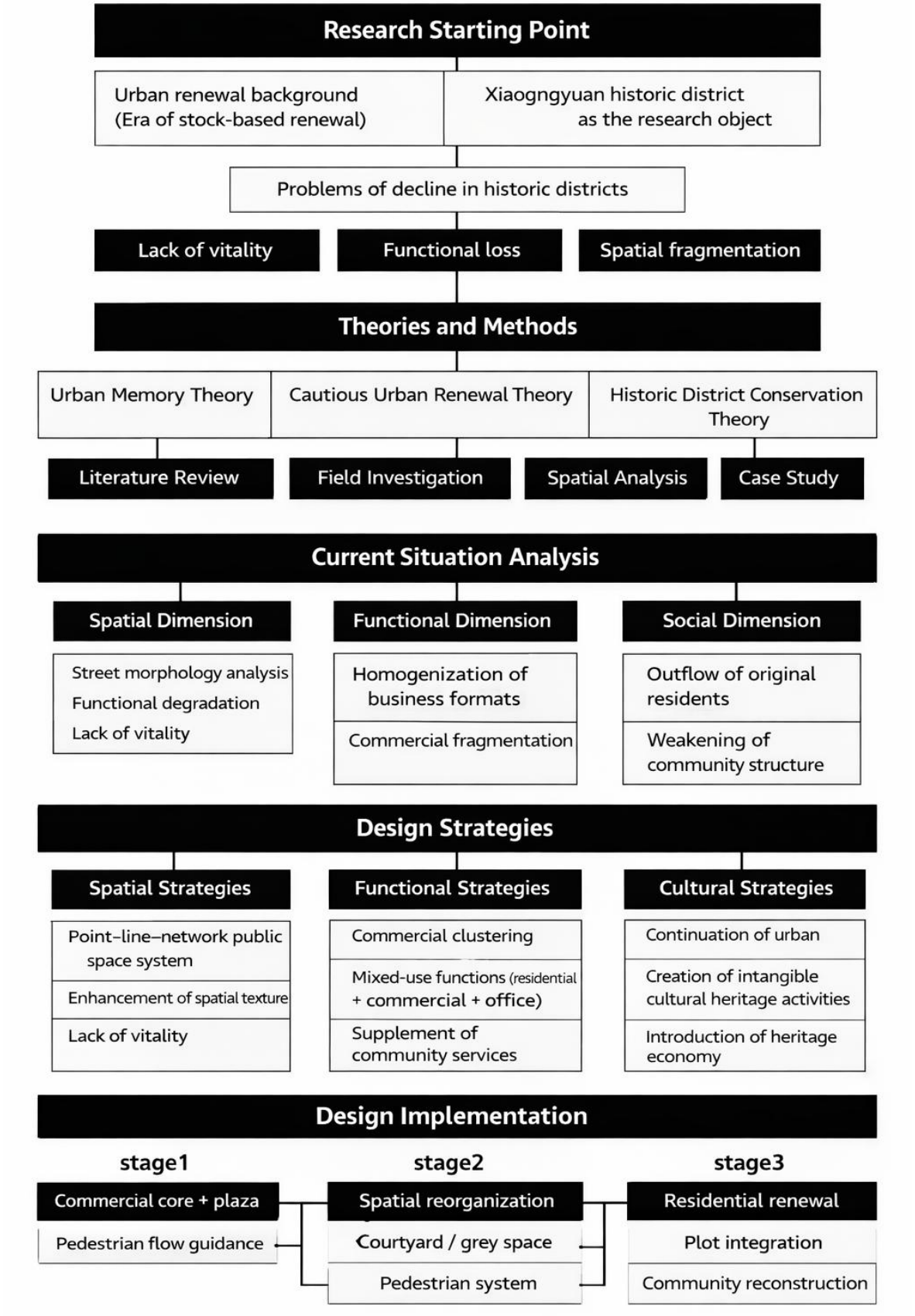
Throughout the research process, we will conduct a comparative analysis of the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area with other historic districts across the country to identify its unique characteristics in terms of spatial layout and historical and cultural heritage. At the same time, we will classify and organize the functional characteristics and spatial forms of different types of public spaces within the area, summarize their existing issues and development potential, and provide a basis for proposing targeted revitalization strategies.

(4) Case Study Method

By analyzing representative case studies of historic district revitalization both domestically and internationally, we summarize their experiences in public space integration, historic

preservation, and district revitalization. We then conduct a comparative analysis in light of the actual conditions of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district to distill design methodologies of practical value, thereby providing practical insights for formulating public space revitalization strategies for the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district.

1.5.2 Research Framework



1.6 Summary of This Chapter

This chapter primarily outlines the research foundation, research subjects, and research methods of this study. Against the backdrop of urban renewal shifting from incremental expansion to the optimization of existing stock, the renewal of historic districts is no longer merely a matter of building restoration or facade improvement, but rather a comprehensive issue involving the continuity of historical spaces, the maintenance of public life, and the coordination of multi-stakeholder interests.First, this chapter provides conceptual definitions and a literature review on “prudent urban renewal,” “urban memory,” “urban heritage,” and the preservation of historic districts. It highlights that urban memory exists not only within historic buildings and spatial forms but is also embodied in residents’ daily activities, public interactions, and local cultural identity; urban heritage, as the material and cultural carrier of a city’s historical development, serves as a crucial foundation that must be continuously protected and revitalized in the renewal of historic districts.

Building on this foundation, this chapter focuses on introducing Germany’s “Prudent Urban Renewal” as the design stance and methodological reference for this study. Prudent Urban Renewal is a renewal philosophy and practical methodology that emerged in Germany during a period of reflection on large-scale demolition-and-reconstruction-style urban renewal. Its core principles emphasize incremental renewal, minimal intervention, the protection of the historical environment, resident participation, and multi-stakeholder consultation. It advocates for the renewal of historic districts through small-scale, phased, and adaptable approaches, grounded in existing urban structures and social relationships.Compared to renewal models that merely pursue spatial reconfiguration or commercial development, “Prudent Urban Renewal” places greater emphasis on historical continuity, social equity, and the continuity of daily life, offering significant methodological insights for this study of the Xiaogongyuan Historic District in Shantou.

Additionally, this chapter clarifies the research subject, scope, and methodology of this study. Focusing primarily on the core area of Shantou’s Xiaogongyuan, the research employs methods such as literature review, field surveys, inductive analysis, and case studies to systematically examine the district’s historical evolution, spatial structure, public space system, and current challenges.In terms of research logic, this study adopts urban memory as

an intermediary perspective for understanding the historical value and spatial identity of Xiaogongyuan, and treats prudent urban renewal as the fundamental stance for subsequent design interventions, seeking to establish connections among historical preservation, public space improvement, and contemporary usage needs.

In summary, this chapter lays the foundation for the subsequent spatial analysis and renewal design of the Shantou Xiaogongyuan historic district through theoretical review and methodological construction. In particular, the principles of gradual intervention, consultative governance, and historical continuity emphasized by prudent urban renewal provide a crucial basis for the design strategies proposed in this paper, including public space integration, dilapidated building renewal, functional revitalization, and multi-stakeholder coordination.

Chapter 2 The Evolution of Urban Renewal Positions

2.1 The Evolution of Urban Design in Germany

2.1.1 Industrial Expansion and the Formation of Metropolises (Late 19th Century–1918)

The period from the latter half of the 19th century to the outbreak of World War I marked a critical phase in Berlin's rapid transformation from a traditional city to an industrial metropolis.Following the establishment of the German Empire in 1871, Berlin developed rapidly through industrialization and capital expansion. A continuous influx of people led to a dramatic expansion of the city's scale, gradually forming a metropolitan structure centered on the historic core and spreading outward. The rapid growth driven by industrialization not only spurred the restructuring of urban space but also laid the foundation for subsequent urban renewal challenges in Germany.

In 1862, James Hobrecht oversaw the development of the "Berlin Expansion Plan," which is regarded as one of the most significant early urban expansion plans in Europe. Unlike the Paris renovation by Haussmann or the Barcelona expansion plan by Cerdà during the same period, Hobrecht did not adopt a strict geometric order or monumental axes; instead, he placed greater emphasis on guiding the process of urban expansion.The plan organized urban growth through a ring road system and a radial street structure, reserving ample public squares and open spaces while maintaining a degree of flexibility regarding existing streets, property boundaries, and infrastructure. This plan formed the basis for Berlin's later "Wilhelminischer Ring" and shaped the fundamental spatial pattern of the city's high-density neighborhoods.

However, against the backdrop of rapid industrialization and capital-driven development, Hobehricht's plan gradually deviated from its original vision during implementation. Due to the inadequacy of urban building regulations at the time, a large number of private developers and speculative capital became involved in urban construction, and high-density "tenement barracks" (Mietskasernen)[21] rapidly became Berlin's most characteristic residential form. These neighborhoods typically consisted of continuous, enclosed blocks and narrow inner courtyards, featuring extremely high building density and

poor ventilation and lighting conditions, which led to severe health and social problems. Although these high-density neighborhoods met the housing needs of the industrial era's large population to some extent, they also exacerbated social stratification and spatial inequality.

In the early 20th century, criticism of "tenement barracks" gradually became a central topic in German urban design discourse. Reformers, including scholars such as Rudolf Eberstadt, generally believed that this high-density, multi-story block model lacked a healthy living environment and viewed it as one of the root causes of problems in industrial cities.Against this backdrop, Germany began exploring low-density suburbanization models, including garden cities, detached housing estates, and residential planning featuring open green spaces. At the same time, the "Greater Berlin Design Competition" of 1908–1910 sought to rethink the overall order of rapidly expanding cities, aiming to replace traditional high-density tenement block models with new urban design approaches and establish a more integrated system of public spaces and infrastructure.

Berlin's urban development during this period, on the one hand, laid the foundation for its basic spatial structure as a modern industrial metropolis; on the other hand, it gave rise to issues such as high-density housing, mixed-use development, inadequate infrastructure, and social polarization. These issues were continually reexamined in subsequent modernist urban planning and postwar urban renewal efforts, ultimately becoming a crucial historical backdrop for the emergence of Germany's "prudent urban renewal."

2.1.2 Modernist Urban Planning and the Shift to Functionalism (1918–1945)

Following the end of World War I, Berlin's urban development entered a new phase of transformation. The economic crisis, housing shortages, and social problems brought about by the war further called into question the traditional high-density neighborhood model.Criticism previously centered on "tenement barracks" gradually evolved during the Weimar Republic into a broader movement for urban reform, seeking to resolve the long-standing issues of sanitation, housing, and social segregation in industrial cities through new approaches to urban design. Against this backdrop, German urban design began to shift from the compact block model of the 19th century toward modernist urban planning that emphasized functional zoning, low-density housing, and modern lifestyles.

Unlike the high-density development of the Imperial era, which relied on private capital, urban construction during the Weimar Republic placed greater emphasis on social welfare. The government began to intervene on a large scale in housing construction, promoting the development of social housing for the working class and low-income groups, and attempting to improve traditional high-density inner-city living environments through new residential models.During this period, a large number of modernist housing estates emerged on the outskirts of Berlin, such as Siemensstadt and the Hufeisensiedlung. These estates generally adopted open layouts, emphasizing sunlight, ventilation, and green spaces, while rejecting traditional enclosed blocks and narrow courtyards, thereby embodying the modernist ideal of "sunlight, air, and green spaces."

At the same time, modernist urban design began to emphasize the rational zoning of urban functions.Traditional mixed-use neighborhoods were gradually divided into distinct functional zones for residential, commercial, transportation, and recreational purposes, with the city viewed as a "machine" that could be organized and managed through scientific methods. This philosophy was closely linked to the international Modernist architectural movement of the time and was influenced by organizations such as CIAM (Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne). In contrast to the complex and heterogeneous social structures of 19th-century urban neighborhoods, Modernism sought to achieve a new form of social organization through clear spatial order and standardized construction.

However, this modernist planning mindset also reinforced the tendency toward spatial segregation to some extent. A large number of social housing projects were situated on the city's outskirts, and the original mixed-use lifestyle of the traditional inner city was gradually eroded. Although modernist housing estates improved sanitary conditions and living environments, their emphasis on functional separation and spatial order also caused cities to gradually lose the complexity and liveliness found in traditional street spaces.Furthermore, attitudes toward the "old city" during this period remained largely negative; many planners viewed historic districts as backward, crowded, and inefficient spaces, and tended to replace them with new urban structures.

After the Nazis came to power in 1933, urban design in Germany became even more dominated by political power. Unlike the Weimar period, which emphasized social housing

and modern living, urban planning during the Nazi era placed greater emphasis on monumentality, axial order, and symbols of power. Albert Speer's "New Berlin" plan sought to reshape Berlin's city center through monumental architecture and axial alignment, transforming the city into a stage for the display of political power.In this process, the existing historic city centers were viewed as outdated structures incapable of meeting the demands of the new order, and many areas were included in large-scale demolition and reconstruction plans. Although most of these plans were never fully implemented, the underlying ideology of "radically restructuring the city" had a profound influence on postwar urban renewal.

Overall, German urban design from 1918 to 1945 evolved from social reform-oriented modernist housing experiments toward a modernist planning system centered on functional zoning and spatial order. Although urban design during this period achieved significant results in improving housing conditions and promoting social housing construction, its rejection of traditional neighborhoods and historic urban spaces also laid the groundwork for later large-scale demolitions and functionalist urban renewal.This mindset of addressing urban problems through "radical reconstruction" further developed during the postwar reconstruction phase and ultimately led to a profound reevaluation of modernist urban planning after the 1970s.

2.1.3 Postwar Reconstruction and Urban Renewal through Large-Scale Demolition and Construction (1945–1970s)

Following the end of World War II, Berlin suffered severe physical destruction and social upheaval. A large number of buildings in the city center were destroyed, and the housing shortage was particularly acute. Against the backdrop of postwar reconstruction, German urban design entered a new phase dominated by modernist planning.Compared to the high-density historic neighborhoods that had formed in the 19th century, modernist urban planning was viewed as a spatial model better suited to the needs of modern society. It emphasized functional zoning, transportation efficiency, and large-scale open spaces, aiming to comprehensively resolve long-standing issues in traditional industrial cities such as poor housing conditions, traffic congestion, and social disorder.

The unique political context of postwar Germany further reinforced this modernist orientation. With the emergence of the Cold War, Berlin was divided into East and West

Berlin, and the two distinct political systems each utilized urban development as a key tool in their ideological competition. Whether it was the Soviet-influenced socialist urban development model in East Berlin or the development path in West Berlin shaped by American modernist planning, both viewed “modernization” as a primary goal of urban reconstruction.During this period, historic neighborhoods were generally regarded as lacking the spatial conditions necessary for modern life, and many traditional districts were consequently viewed as “backward spaces” in need of replacement.

In the 1950s and 1960s, modernist urban renewal entered a phase of full-scale implementation in Berlin. Large-scale demolition and wholesale reconstruction (Kahlschlagsanierung) became the most typical form of renewal during this period. In 1963, the renewal project on Brunnenstraße in the West Berlin district of Wedding was officially launched, becoming one of the representative cases of post-war large-scale demolition and reconstruction in Germany.The original high-density rental housing blocks were completely demolished and replaced with modernist high-rise residential buildings and large open green spaces. At the same time, traditional mixed-use street spaces were segregated into single-use zones, and urban roads were further prioritized for motor vehicle traffic, with the construction of numerous urban expressways and ring road systems beginning.

While this renewal model achieved some success in improving infrastructure and housing conditions, its problems gradually became apparent. On the one hand, large-scale demolition led to the disappearance of many historically significant neighborhoods and traditional urban fabric, causing urban spaces to become increasingly monotonous and standardized. On the other hand, many original residents were relocated to social housing estates on the city’s outskirts during the renewal process, disrupting traditional community structures and severing the social relationships and daily life scenes that had accumulated over time in these historic neighborhoods.While the functional separation emphasized by Modernism improved spatial order, it also undermined the mixed, diverse, and continuous street life characteristic of traditional European cities.

Furthermore, the postwar modernist approach to urban renewal, with its dismissive attitude toward the “old city,” sparked increasing social controversy. By the late 1960s, with the rise of youth student movements, critical social thought, and awareness of historical

heritage preservation, people began to re-examine the damage that large-scale demolition and reconstruction had inflicted on urban culture and social structures.Traditional neighborhoods were no longer viewed merely as inefficient and outdated spaces but were gradually re-recognized as vital sites that embody urban history, social relationships, and collective memory.In 1971, Germany enacted the Urban Development Promotion Act (Städtebauförderungsgesetz), marking the state's formal intervention in urban renewal and gradually placing greater emphasis on social research, public participation, and the protection of the public interest. During the same period, the European "Year of Architectural Heritage" and the adoption of the European Charter for Architectural Heritage further promoted a renewed appreciation within German society for the value of preserving the historical environment.

Consequently, urban renewal in Germany from the postwar period through the 1970s not only established the institutional foundations for modern urban renewal but also exposed the limitations of modernist planning in the revitalization of historic districts.While large-scale demolition and reconstruction improved the physical environment, they led to the fragmentation of historical fabric, the breakdown of social relationships, and a lack of human connection in urban spaces. These issues ultimately prompted German urban design to shift from the modernist path of "radical reconstruction" toward renewal approaches that placed greater emphasis on historical continuity, social equity, and public participation, laying the intellectual foundation for the subsequent "prudent urban renewal."

2.1.4 Reflection on Modernism and the Shift Toward Prudent Renewal (1970s–1990s)

By the 1970s, German urban development had shifted from the postwar phase of rapid reconstruction to a comprehensive reevaluation of modernist urban planning. While the large-scale demolition and reconstruction model that had long dominated urban renewal had improved housing and infrastructure conditions in the short term, the resulting destruction of the historical environment, the disintegration of communities, and the homogenization of urban spaces became increasingly evident.Particularly in traditional inner-city areas such as Berlin, large numbers of historic neighborhoods were demolished in their entirety during the renewal process, with original residents relocated to large-scale social housing estates on the

outskirts, leading to the gradual disappearance of traditional street life and community structures. This approach to renewal, centered on “complete replacement,” began to face widespread skepticism from all sectors of society.

At the same time, the oil crisis of the 1970s, slowing economic growth, and the emergence of environmental issues prompted German society to re-examine the modernization path centered on rapid expansion and large-scale development. The focus of urban renewal shifted from an exclusive emphasis on spatial growth and functional efficiency to a greater concern for the existing urban environment, social equity, and quality of life. Against this backdrop, the value of historic neighborhoods was re-recognized.Traditional high-density neighborhoods were no longer viewed merely as outdated “problem spaces,” but came to be understood as vital urban resources that embody the city’s history, social relationships, and daily life.

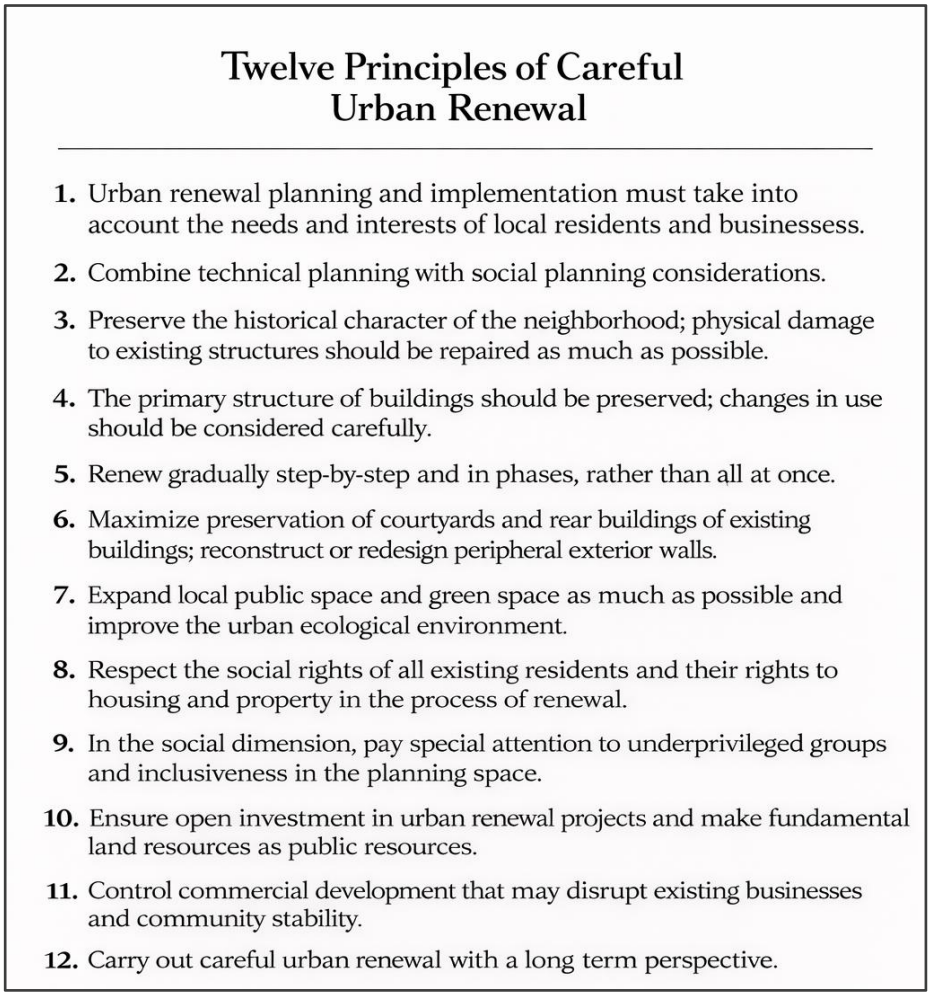
During this period, the governance of urban renewal in Germany also underwent significant changes. The large-scale demolition and renewal projects previously led by the government through a top-down approach gradually shifted toward a model that placed greater emphasis on public participation and social consultation. A large number of residents began to oppose demolition plans and intervened in the urban renewal process through protests, community organizations, and “squatting movements.”From the late 1970s to the early 1980s, areas such as Kreuzberg in Berlin became among the most hotly contested zones of social conflict. For many residents, urban renewal was no longer merely a matter of physical space transformation; it also involved issues of the right to housing, community belonging, and social justice.

Against this backdrop, “prudent urban renewal” (Behutsame Stadterneuerung) gradually took shape and became a significant turning point in German urban renewal.Unlike the modernist approach that emphasized wholesale demolition and functional replacement, “prudent Urban Renewal” focused on preserving existing urban structures. It advocated for improving living environments through small-scale, incremental spatial interventions rather than completely reconstructing original neighborhoods. Its core was not a fixed design theory, but rather a stance and methodology developed to address the complex challenges of historic districts—namely, striking a balance between preservation and development, and achieving

spatial improvements while maintaining the city's historical and social fabric.

The most representative example of this shift was the International Building Exhibition (IBA 1984/87) in Berlin. In 1979, Berlin established a dedicated IBA agency with the aim of exploring new development pathways through experimental urban renewal. Among its initiatives, the "IBA for Existing Buildings" component, led by Hardt-Walther Hämer, focused on renewal practices in historic neighborhoods such as Kreuzberg.Hämer proposed the renewal concept that "block structure takes precedence over individual buildings," emphasizing the gradual improvement of living quality through partial repairs, courtyard renovations, the revitalization of existing buildings, and the enhancement of public spaces—all while preserving the existing street fabric and community structure. Among these, the "Block 118" project became a key representative case of prudent renewal, demonstrating that traditional neighborhoods need not rely on demolition to achieve renewal by reducing local density, improving public spaces, and strengthening resident participation.

In 1983, building on the IBA's practices, Berlin further proposed the "12 Principles of Prrudent Urban Renewal"[22] , which included safeguarding existing residents, respecting the block structure, strengthening public participation, and implementing renewal in phases.These principles gradually became the foundational values for the renewal of historic districts in Germany and exerted a broad influence on subsequent urban renewal efforts across Europe. Unlike Modernism, which emphasized "rebuilding the city," prudent renewal focuses more on "how to continue living within the existing city," shifting the emphasis from spatial reconstruction to the restoration of social and spatial relationships.



Twelve Principles of Careful Urban Renewal

1. Urban renewal planning and implementation must take into account the needs and interests of local residents and businessess.
2. Combine technical planning with social planning considerations.
3. Preserve the historical character of the neighborhood; physical damage to existing structures should be repaired as much as possible.
4. The primary structure of buildings should be preserved; changes in use should be considered carefully.
5. Renew gradually step-by-step and in phases, rather than all at once.
6. Maximize preservation of courtyards and rear buildings of existing buildings; reconstruct or redesign peripheral exterior walls.
7. Expand local public space and green space as much as possible and improve the urban ecological environment.
8. Respect the social rights of all existing residents and their rights to housing and property in the process of renewal.
9. In the social dimension, pay special attention to underprivileged groups and inclusiveness in the planning space.
10. Ensure open investment in urban renewal projects and make fundamental land resources as public resources.
11. Control commercial development that may disrupt existing businesses and community stability.
12. Carry out careful urban renewal with a long term perspective.

Fig.2 -1 12 Principles of prudent Regeneration

(Source: Reference 22)

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and German reunification, the approach of "prudent renewal" was further extended to the former East German regions. Due to a long-term lack of maintenance, many historic neighborhoods had fallen into severe disrepair. However, unlike the postwar renewal efforts of the past, Germany did not resort to large-scale demolition once again; instead, it promoted the revitalization of old urban areas primarily through renovation, incremental renewal, and public financial support.Areas such as Prenzlauer Berg and Spandauer Vorstadt became key examples of the implementation of prudent renewal. In this process, urban renewal gradually evolved into a governance model combining "public intervention, market participation, and public consultation," emphasizing the preservation of the historic environment while also allowing private capital and new urban functions to enter historic districts.

Overall, the shift in German urban design since the 1970s represents, in essence, a

reevaluation of Modernism's ideology of "radically restructuring the city." prudent renewal does not entirely reject modernization but seeks to establish a new balance among historical continuity, social equity, and spatial development through incremental, small-scale, and consultative approaches. This approach to renewal later became not only a key methodology for revitalizing historic districts in Germany but also provided new avenues for reflection on contemporary urban renewal in historic cities.



Fig.2 -2 Examples of prudent renewal in the Kreuzberg district during the International Architecture Exhibition

(Source: Reference 23)

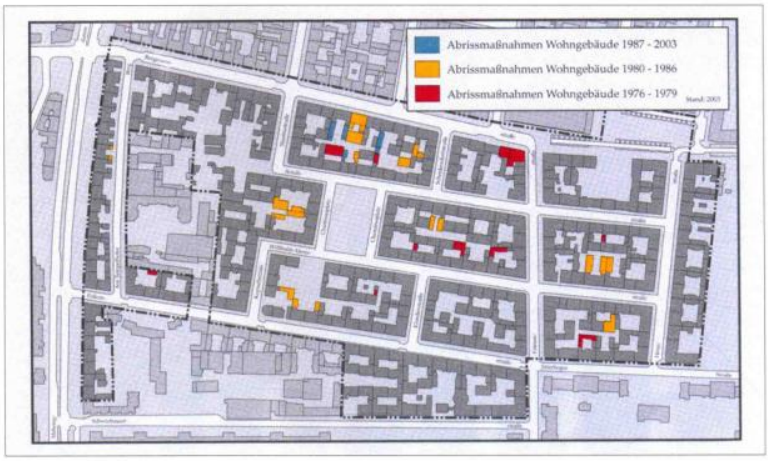


Fig.2 -3 Map of the Schamissoplatz conservation area

(Source: Kreuzberg District Administration)

2.1.5 Socially-Driven Adjustments to Prudent Urban Renewal (1999–2019)

By the late 1990s, urban renewal in Germany had gradually entered a new phase of adjustment. Compared to the previous renewal model, which primarily focused on the physical restoration of historic districts and the preservation of spatial structures, the core

challenges facing German cities during this period began to shift. With the acceleration of globalization, industrial restructuring, and the influx of large numbers of immigrants and refugees into German cities, some inner-city neighborhoods gradually faced rising unemployment, deepening social poverty, and community marginalization.In some areas with high concentrations of immigrants, neighborhoods even became socially “stigmatized,” and relying solely on traditional spatial rehabilitation and environmental improvements was no longer sufficient to effectively address their deep-seated social issues. Against this backdrop, the focus of German urban renewal began to shift further from “spatial improvement” toward “social governance,” and urban renewal gradually became an important tool for coordinating social relations, stabilizing community structures, and promoting social integration.

During this period, the German government began to re-evaluate the social dimension of urban renewal and emphasized the maintenance of sustainable neighborhood development through long-term community governance.For example, Berlin established the “Monitoring of Social Urban Development” (Monitoring Soziale Stadtentwicklung) in 1996. By conducting long-term monitoring of indicators such as community employment, education, demographic structure, and social assistance, the program dynamically assesses the development status of different neighborhoods. This monitoring mechanism demonstrates that urban renewal is no longer limited to physical spatial transformation but has begun to focus more on changes in the internal social structure and living conditions of communities.

In 1999, Germany officially launched the “Social City” (Soziale Stadt) initiative, marking a shift in German urban renewal from a traditional spatial orientation toward a comprehensive social governance model. Compared to the prudent renewal efforts of the past, which primarily focused on building renovations and improvements to public spaces, the “Social City” initiative places greater emphasis on rebuilding social relationships within communities, stressing the promotion of stable community development through integrated interventions in spatial, economic, cultural, and social policies.In this process, public participation ceased to be merely a supplementary procedure in the renewal process and gradually became a key driving force behind community renewal. Community residents, schools, social organizations, and local institutions began to jointly participate in renewal decision-making, collectively shaping the community’s future through workshops, community

activities, and consultative mechanisms.

The renewal approach at this stage also places greater emphasis on activating social capital and local networks.For example, in the Wrangelkiez renewal project in Berlin's Kreuzberg district, educational networks were viewed as a key vehicle for community renewal. Through collaboration among schools, training institutions, and community organizations, connections between different social groups were strengthened, thereby promoting social integration within the community. This renewal model demonstrates that urban renewal has shifted from merely improving the "physical environment" to rebuilding "social relationships" and "community identity."

At the same time, the governance structure of urban renewal in Germany has undergone significant changes. The government no longer relies entirely on traditional top-down renewal models but has gradually established a collaborative governance mechanism involving "government–community–market" cooperation. To support public participation and community-led self-organization in renewal, Germany introduced various new funding and planning tools during this period.For example, the "Cooperative Renewal Fund" (Verfügungsfonds) provides flexible financial support for small-scale community projects, while the "Integrated Urban Development Concept" (ISEK) has been formally incorporated into the legal framework as a communicative and consultative planning tool to coordinate the interests and renewal objectives of different stakeholders. Through these institutional tools, urban renewal has begun to place greater emphasis on process-oriented consultation and dynamic governance rather than solely on the final spatial outcomes.

Furthermore, during this period, German urban renewal continued to uphold the principles of "gradualism" and "multi-stakeholder consultation" emphasized by the "prudent renewal" approach. However, its focus expanded from the early emphasis on preserving the physical spaces of historic districts to broader issues such as community stability, social equity, and cultural integration. The goal of urban renewal was no longer merely to "repair the city," but to maintain community vitality and social cohesion through sustained social interventions.

After 2019, Germany further consolidated its existing urban renewal system, summarizing the key priorities as "living centers," "social cohesion," and "sustainable

growth." This indicates that German urban renewal has evolved from the large-scale physical transformations of the early period into a comprehensive urban development strategy that integrates spatial, social, ecological, and governance dimensions.At the same time, in the face of new challenges such as the impact of e-commerce, the decline of commercial districts, climate change, and demographic shifts, the renewal of Germany's historic districts has also begun to explore pathways toward green renewal, low-carbon development, and more flexible community governance.

Overall, the development of German urban renewal during this phase demonstrates that "prudent renewal" is no longer merely a spatial renewal method for the preservation of historic districts, but has gradually evolved into an urban renewal stance that emphasizes social equity, public consultation, and long-term governance. Its core focus has also expanded from "how to preserve old buildings" to "how to maintain a community's capacity for sustainable development," which holds significant implications for the renewal of historic districts today.

Table2 -1 Diagram of the Evolution of German Urban Design and Urban Renewal Thought (self-drawn)

Stages of Renewal	Industrial Expansion Phase (1871–1918)	Modern & Functionalist Phase (1918–1945)	Mass Demolition and Reconstruction Phase (1945–1970s)	Formation of a Phase of Reflection and Prudent Renewal (1970s–1990s)	Social Governance-Oriented Renewal Phase (1999–2019)
Key Dates	1871: Establishment of the German Empire; 1862: Hohlebricht Plan; 1908–1910: Greater Berlin Competition	1918 Weimar Republic; 1920 Establishment of Greater Berlin; 1933 Nazi era	1945 End of World War II; 1963 Berlin's large-scale demolition and reconstruction; 1971 Urban Development Assistance Act	1975 European Year of Architectural Heritage; 1979 Launch of the IBA; 1983 "12 Principles of prudent Renewal"; 1984/87 IBA Berlin	1999 "Social City" initiative; 2004 Revision of the Building Code; 2019 Integration of the renewal system
Urban Characteristics	Industrial Expansion Population Boom High-density rental neighborhoods Capital-Driven Development	Social Housing Construction Suburbanization Functional zoning Large-scale axes	Postwar Reconstruction Car-Oriented Development Large-scale demolition High-Rise Social Housing	Inner-city renewal Small-Scale Renovations Historic District Preservation Community Participation	Community Governance Social Integration Immigrant Community Renewal Multi-stakeholder Collaboration
Keywords	Mietskasernen (Rental Barracks) Wilhelmsring High-density neighborhoods Industrial City Urban expansion	Functionalism Social Housing Garden City CIAM Modernism	Kahlschlag redevelopment Slum clearance Urban expressways Modernization Functional Segregation	Prudent Urban Renewal Gradual renewal Small-scale interventions Public Participation Renovation and patching	Social City Collaborative Governance Community Empowerment Social Equity Social Capital
Urban Design Philosophy	Metropolitan Development Infrastructure-Driven Urban Expansion Planning	Sunlight, Air, and Green Spaces Rational City Functional Segregation Spatial Order	Radical Urban Reconstruction Efficiency First The Motorized City	Blocks Take Precedence Over Buildings Preserving the Urban Fabric Social Equity Consensus-Based Renewal	Integrated Spatial and Social Renewal Communication-Based Planning Long-term Governance Community Stabilization

Key Issues	Overcrowding Poor Sanitation Social Segregation Speculative Development	Neglect of Historic Neighborhoods Erosion of street life Monotonous Spaces	Loss of Historical Fabric Community Disintegration Spatial homogenization Resident Relocation	From “Demolition” to “Restoration” From “Rebuilding” to “Continuity” From “Government-Led” to “Public Participation”	Resettlement Issues Economic Decline Community Poverty Climate Change

2.2 A Design Approach to Prudent Urban Renewal

2.2.1 Core Values of Prudent Urban Renewal

The emergence of prudent urban renewal essentially represents a re-examination of historical urban development approaches by German urban design following a long period of modernist planning practices. Compared to the post-war modernist renewal model centered on efficiency, functional zoning, and comprehensive reconstruction, prudent renewal places greater emphasis on the continuous relationship between the urban historical environment, social structures, and daily life. Its core lies not in pursuing large-scale spatial restructuring, but in seeking a more balanced and sustainable renewal path between preservation and development.

Among these, “incremental renewal” is one of the most important value orientations of prudent urban renewal. Unlike one-time, wholesale demolition and reconstruction, prudent urban renewal emphasizes that renewal should be advanced gradually through phased, small-scale, and long-term approaches, allowing spaces to evolve through continuous use and adaptation. This incremental approach not only helps mitigate the social risks associated with large-scale development but also preserves sufficient room for adjustment during the renewal process to accommodate complex and ever-changing urban needs.

Corresponding to incremental renewal, “minimal intervention” constitutes a key principle of prudent renewal. It emphasizes that interventions in the historic environment should be restrained, preserving existing block structures, building facades, and spatial scales as much as possible, and avoiding destructive reconfigurations of the original urban fabric.Historic neighborhoods are no longer viewed as “outdated spaces” in need of complete replacement, but are reinterpreted as urban resources with the potential for continuous renewal. Consequently, the focus of renewal lies not in creating an entirely new urban Fig, but in enhancing environmental quality through limited spatial improvements.

At the same time, prudent renewal places particular emphasis on social equity and the

protection of residents' interests. During the large-scale demolition and reconstruction in postwar Germany, a large number of original residents were forced to leave historic districts, and traditional community ties were disrupted. Consequently, prudent renewal posits that renewal is not merely a spatial issue but also a social one. One of its core objectives is to maintain the stability of community structures and prevent population displacement and social exclusion resulting from capital intervention and spatial renewal.The right to housing, daily life, and community relationships of long-term residents are regarded as key elements that must be prioritized and protected during the renewal process.

Based on this objective, public participation has gradually become an integral part of prudent renewal. Compared to traditional top-down planning approaches, prudent renewal places greater emphasis on the rights of residents, community organizations, and local groups to participate in and negotiate the renewal process. Renewal plans are no longer determined unilaterally by the government or planners but are gradually formed through continuous communication and feedback. Public participation is not merely a procedural arrangement but a vital means of maintaining community identity and social equity.

Furthermore, prudent renewal emphasizes a dynamic balance achieved through multi-stakeholder negotiation. During urban renewal, the government, the market, designers, and residents often have differing priorities: the government emphasizes public interest and historical preservation; the market focuses on economic returns; and residents place greater importance on residential quality and the continuity of their way of life. Therefore, prudent renewal does not seek to eliminate these differences but rather establishes a balanced relationship among different stakeholders through negotiation mechanisms, making renewal a process of continuous coordination and adjustment.

Finally, historical continuity serves as a crucial value foundation for prudent renewal. Prudent renewal does not interpret historical preservation merely as the retention of buildings; rather, it focuses on the lifestyles, street relationships, and social memories that have accumulated over the long term within the urban fabric. The value of historic districts lies not only in their physical form but also in the daily activities of residents and the processes through which they use these spaces. Consequently, the goal of renewal is not to restore a "static city" from a specific historical moment, but to realize new urban life within the

continuity of history.Overall, the core value orientation of prudent renewal embodies a shift in urban renewal philosophy from “spatial reconstruction” to “relational continuity.” Its focus extends beyond the physical space itself to encompass the holistic relationships among social structures, historical memory, and urban life.

2.2.2 Spatial Strategies in Prudent Renewal

At the level of concrete spatial practice, prudent urban renewal has not established a fixed design model. Instead, it has developed a series of spatial renewal strategies centered on “continuing the existing city”[26] . These strategies emphasize improving the neighborhood environment through limited, incremental spatial interventions while respecting the historical context and social structure, thereby avoiding the spatial discontinuities caused by the “large-scale demolition and reconstruction” typical of modernist renewal.

Among these, repair and patching are the most fundamental spatial strategies in prudent renewal. Compared to wholesale demolition and reconstruction, prudent renewal tends to focus on partial restoration and supplementation of existing buildings and neighborhood structures, preserving the overall fabric of the neighborhood by improving building facilities, enhancing the public environment, and restoring historical facades."Patching" refers not only to filling in missing parts of the physical space but also emphasizes restoring the neighborhood’s original spatial relationships and daily rhythms through small-scale interventions, fostering a continuous rather than adversarial relationship between new and old spaces.

Adaptive reuse is another key method within prudent renewal. Historic buildings and old industrial facilities are no longer viewed as obsolete spaces to be cleared away, but are instead reimagined with new functions. For example, old factories, warehouses, or historic buildings can be repurposed as cultural spaces, community facilities, or creative office spaces, thereby meeting new urban needs while preserving their original historical characteristics. This approach not only prevents the waste of resources but also allows historic spaces to continue participating in contemporary urban life.

Prudent renewal emphasizes the improvement of the internal spatial structure of historic districts through infill development.Within historic districts, vacant lots and fragmented

spaces created by demolition, abandonment, or urban development changes often become key intervention points for renewal. Compared to comprehensive reconstruction, prudent renewal tends to gradually enhance the district's functional and spatial systems through small-scale building insertions, courtyard renovations, or the addition of public spaces, ensuring that new interventions integrate seamlessly into the existing urban fabric.

At the level of public space, prudent renewal places particular emphasis on the importance of everyday living spaces such as streets, squares, and courtyards.Modernist urban renewal often treats public spaces as mere appendages to transportation and functional organization, whereas prudent renewal refocuses on street life and public interaction. Through courtyard renovations, pedestrianization of streets, the creation of community squares, and the revitalization of gray spaces, it restores the daily connections between people within historic neighborhoods. Public spaces thus cease to be merely physical spaces and become vital vessels for sustaining community relationships and urban memory.

Slow-traffic systems and mixed-use development are also key spatial strategies in prudent renewal. Unlike modernism, which emphasizes functional separation and prioritizes motorized traffic, prudent renewal places greater importance on the pedestrian experience and spatial continuity within the neighborhood. By reducing the impact of motorized traffic, restoring the public nature of streets, and strengthening mixed-use layouts, it reestablishes the connections between residential, commercial, and public activities within historic neighborhoods. This mixed-use spatial structure not only helps maintain the vitality of the neighborhood but also enhances the livability and sustainability of historic districts.

Overall, the spatial strategies of prudent renewal do not seek to establish a uniform formal language. Instead, they emphasize achieving a harmonious relationship between the historical environment and contemporary life through methods such as restoration, patching, adaptive reuse, and small-scale interventions, all while respecting the existing urban fabric.

2.2.3 Negotiation Mechanisms and Dynamic Interactions in Prudent Urban Renewal

A key characteristic of prudent urban renewal lies in its understanding of the process not merely as a spatial construction issue, but as a dynamic negotiation involving complex relationships among the government, the market, residents, and design stakeholders. In this

process, the spatial form is not determined by a single planning authority but gradually emerges through continuous negotiation and coordination among various stakeholders. Consequently, the “negotiation-based” approach emphasized in prudent renewal is not only a governance method but also profoundly influences the logic underlying the generation of spatial forms and renewal strategies.

In the renewal of historic districts, the government typically assumes the role of establishing baseline requirements and conservation regulations. To maintain the overall continuity of the historic environment, the government often imposes controls on building heights, street scales, facade forms, material colors, and the proportion of public space. For example, in historic districts featuring arcades, to ensure the continuity of street space and the overall character of the area, the government usually sets explicit requirements regarding the height ratios of arcade facades, eave relationships, and facade order.These regulations constitute the “rigid boundaries” of historic district renewal, aimed at ensuring that urban memory and historical characteristics are not destroyed by capital-driven development. However, within these constraints, designers, developers, and residents do not passively accept the situation; rather, they continuously seek possibilities for spatial utilization and the realization of interests within the regulatory framework.For example, while the front facade of arcades must maintain a uniform scale and continuity, design can create more flexible spaces on the rear of buildings, in internal courtyards, or on non-core facades. By expanding balconies, adding transitional spaces, or introducing multi-functional areas, designers can enhance living quality and usage efficiency. This spatial logic of “control at the front—flexibility at the back” embodies the typical “rigid control—flexible response” relationship found in prudent urban renewal.

At the same time, residents’ demands and market forces continue to shape the direction of renewal. Residents are increasingly focused on improving living conditions, reducing living costs, and preserving community continuity, while market actors tend to prioritize commercial development to enhance land value and economic returns. The government, meanwhile, must strike a balance among historical preservation, social equity, and economic development. Consequently, prudent renewal does not seek to eliminate these contradictions but rather establishes a dynamic coordination mechanism among different stakeholders

through public participation, community consultation, and phased adjustments.

In this process, the final form of a space often does not stem from a single design intent, but rather emerges gradually through multi-stakeholder negotiations.Spatial renewal in historic districts is thus characterized by distinct openness and uncertainty; the renewal process resembles an ongoing social negotiation rather than a one-time planning and construction endeavor. This mechanism of negotiation also distinguishes “prudent renewal” from traditional modernist renewal models, shifting the focus away from reconstructing the city through uniform planning toward establishing a long-term balance between the existing historic environment and the practical needs of daily life.

Consequently, the logic of spatial generation in prudent renewal essentially embodies a “freedom within constraints” and a “balance through negotiation.” The government maintains the overall continuity of the historic environment through institutional frameworks[27] , while designers and users continuously explore new lifestyles and spatial possibilities within these boundaries, thereby enabling historic districts to maintain a continuous evolution between preservation and development.

2.3 Selecting a Design Approach for Complex Historic Districts

In research on the renewal of historic districts, many traditional urban design theories place greater emphasis on spatial order, functional organization, and form control. For example, functionalist planning emphasizes urban efficiency and zoning logic; typological studies focus on the archetypal relationships of urban forms; and certain urban design methods centered on physical space tend to shape the overall urban environment through a unified formal language.While these theories are highly applicable to new district development or modern urban expansion, their limitations become increasingly apparent when the focus shifts to historic districts that have evolved over the long term. The challenges faced by historic districts are often not merely a matter of spatial obsolescence, but involve multiple dimensions such as historical context, social relations, residents’ lives, and cultural identity; consequently, their renewal processes exhibit distinct complexity and dynamism.

Shantou’s Xiaogongyuan is a prime example of such a complex historic urban area. As a major commercial hub established during the opening of the port, Xiaogongyuan not only

preserves a relatively intact arcade façade and radial block structure but also perpetuates the commercial activities and lifestyle that have long been established in the Chaoshan region.The arcade spaces, the network of streets and alleys, and the traditional “shop-front, residence-above” model within the district collectively form a spatial environment that is both historic and vibrant with daily life. However, in the course of urban development and renewal, Xiaogongyuan simultaneously faces issues such as dilapidated buildings, insufficient public space, a tendency toward over-tourism, and the loss of residents. For such a historic district, renewal is no longer merely a physical transformation of the built environment, but involves the re-harmonization of spatial, social, and cultural relationships.

Furthermore, the current renewal process in Xiaogongyuan involves ongoing negotiations among multiple stakeholders. On the one hand, the government must use planning controls to preserve the historical character and spatial order—for example, by imposing restrictions on the continuity of arcade facades, building heights, and alleyway scales to ensure the continuity of the overall historical environment;on the other hand, residents and users are more concerned with living quality and practical needs, hoping to secure greater living space and a better spatial experience within existing regulatory frameworks—for instance, by improving daily living conditions through internal courtyards, rear balconies, or transitional spaces. At the same time, the involvement of market actors further complicates the renewal process, keeping the revitalization of historic districts in a constant dynamic balance between preservation, development, and use.

For this reason, this study does not attempt to directly apply any single, fixed urban design theory, but rather leans toward adopting a “design stance” capable of addressing complex real-world issues.Compared to renewal approaches that emphasize uniform forms and comprehensive restructuring, prudent urban renewal places greater emphasis on the issue of continuity within the historical context. Its core lies not in creating entirely new spatial forms, but in promoting spatial improvements through incremental, small-scale, and adaptable interventions based on the existing urban fabric. This approach minimizes the risk of historical destruction while reserving room for subsequent adjustments and public participation.

On the other hand, prudent renewal emphasizes the consultative and open nature of the

renewal process.Spatial outcomes are not directly determined by a single planning logic but are gradually shaped through continuous negotiation and adjustment among the government, residents, designers, and the market. This approach is particularly crucial for small parks, as their historic neighborhoods retain strong residential attributes and community structures; overreliance on one-time, comprehensive development can easily lead to the disappearance of existing social relationships and local characteristics. In contrast, incremental renewal and multi-stakeholder participation are more conducive to maintaining the neighborhood's original social order and spatial memory.

The introduction of urban memory theory further reinforces the validity of this design approach. For historic districts, their value lies not only in the architectural character itself but also in the public activities, local culture, and daily life that have evolved over time. If renewal stops at superficial restoration of the architectural facade while neglecting the continuity of existing living environments and social relationships, historic districts can easily degenerate into "display spaces" that are merely scenic and commercialized.Therefore, compared to design methods that emphasize spatial form itself, the principles of "prudent renewal"—which focus on gradualism, continuity of daily life, and public consultation—are better equipped to address the issue of "memory continuity" in historic districts[28] .

Against this backdrop, this study interprets prudent urban renewal as a design stance toward complex historic districts, rather than a fixed theory to be directly replicated. Its significance lies not in mechanically replicating specific renewal models from German historic districts, but in drawing on their emphasis on historical continuity, social relations, and consultation mechanisms to address the practical challenges faced by Shantou's Xiaogongyuan during its renewal process, thereby establishing a more sustainable balance between historical preservation and contemporary life.

2.4 Urban Memory and the Renewal of Historic Districts

2.4.1 Urban Memory as the Foundation of Spatial Value in Historic Districts

Urban memory is the collective memory and sense of place formed through the continuous accumulation of spatial environments, social activities, and daily life over the course of a city's long-term development. Compared to a focus solely on the historical

preservation of buildings themselves, urban memory places greater emphasis on the enduring emotional connection between people and space. Its value resides not only in the historic buildings themselves but also in the streets, squares, arcades, and the lifestyles long established by residents.

The value of traditional historic districts stems not merely from architectural character, but more significantly from the social relationships and scenes of daily life they embody. Commercial activities along the streets, public interactions beneath arcades, and the social networks formed within the community are all integral components of urban memory. Therefore, when a historic district is demolished in its entirety, even if the original architectural forms are replicated, it is difficult to truly restore its original spatial atmosphere and sense of place.

Urban memory is typically embedded within specific spatial structures, such as the scale of traditional alleys, the continuous facades of arcades, plaza nodes, and courtyard spaces. These spaces not only constitute the physical environment of historic districts but also sustain residents' emotional attachment to the place. Consequently, the renewal of historic districts is not merely about preserving physical structures but also about maintaining the continuity of urban life.

In modern urban renewal processes, historic districts often face the problem of spatial homogenization resulting from tourism and commercialization.The theory of urban memory emphasizes that the renewal of historic districts should not be limited to the superficial recreation of their appearance but should focus on the continuation of authentic living scenarios and social relationships. By preserving existing spatial structures and community activities, the historic environment can continue to participate in contemporary urban life. Consequently, urban memory not only constitutes the fundamental basis of value for historic districts but also provides crucial theoretical support for the principles of incremental renewal, public participation, and historical continuity emphasized in subsequent prudent urban renewal efforts.

2.4.2 The Relationship Between Urban Memory and Spatial Renewal

Urban memory is closely linked to spatial transformation. Urban memory refers to

people's collective recollections of historical events, cultural activities, and life experiences within specific spaces[24] , while spatial transformation involves reshaping and renewing the physical carriers of these memories. Appropriate spatial transformation can preserve and reawaken urban memory, integrating historical culture with modern functions[25] , endowing old spaces with new vitality and meaning. At the same time, through the preservation and reuse of neighborhood fabric, historic buildings, and public spaces, urban memory is sustained, strengthening people's sense of place and promoting the organic renewal and transmission of urban functions[26] .

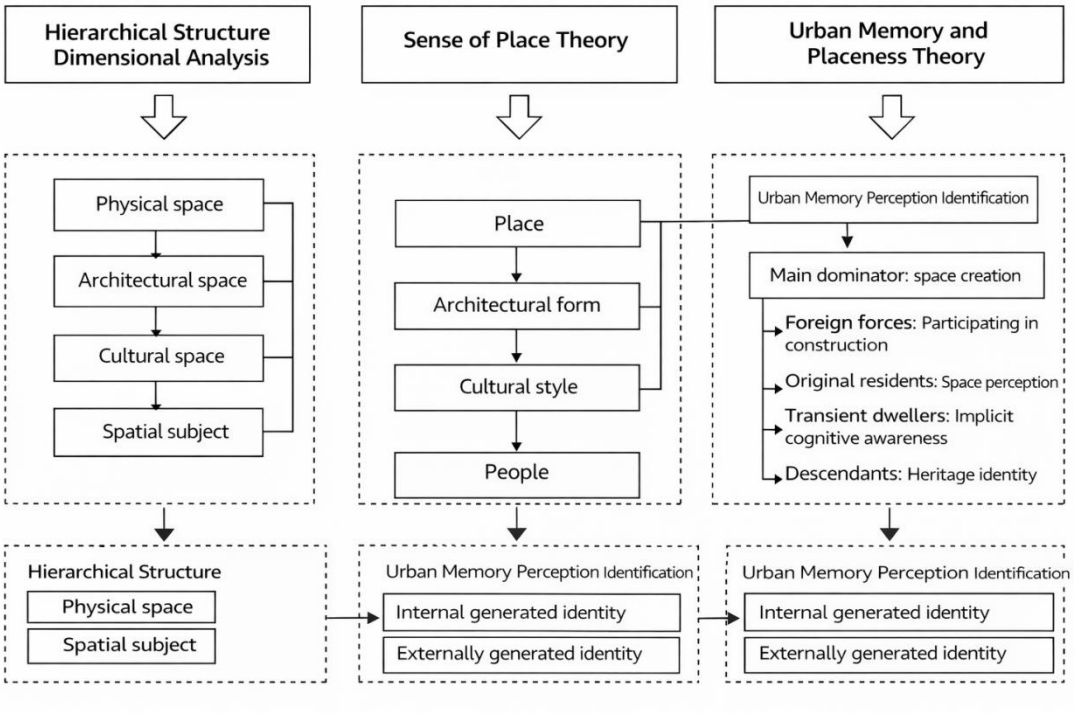


Fig.2 -4 Mechanisms of Urban Memory Theory

(Source: Author's own illustration)

2.4.3 Urban Memory as a Connecting Medium Between Prudent Renewal and Xiao Park

Although Germany's historic districts and Shantou's Xiao Park differ significantly in terms of geographical environment, social context, and urban development trajectories, both face similar challenges in the process of historic district renewal: the decline of historic spaces, the weakening of traditional community structures, and spatial and social conflicts arising from the transformation of urban center functions. From this perspective, urban memory

serves as a crucial link connecting Germany's experience with prudent urban renewal and the renewal practices at Shantou's Xiao Park, providing a foundation for establishing comparability between the two.

The emergence of Germany's "prudent urban renewal" was, at its core, a response to the historical discontinuities caused by postwar modernist renewal models. Under the influence of large-scale demolition and functionalist planning, numerous historic districts in cities like Berlin lost their original street-level vitality and community ties, as urban spaces gradually transformed from "places of life" into purely functional spaces.Consequently, "Prudent Urban Renewal" began to refocus on daily life, public interaction, and resident identity within historic districts, emphasizing the preservation of urban memory through incremental renewal and public participation. This emphasis on "historical continuity" means that Prudent Urban Renewal focuses not only on architectural preservation itself but also on the social relationships and lifestyles that have developed over the long term within these spaces.

Similar issues are also present in the development of the Xiaogongyuan Historic District in Shantou. As a major commercial and cultural center that emerged during Shantou's opening to foreign trade, Xiaogongyuan not only embodies physical spatial characteristics such as arcade architecture and a radial street grid but also documents the development of commercial trade, overseas Chinese culture, and daily life in the Chaoshan region.Commercial activities along the arcaded streets, public interactions in the alleys, and the traditional "shop-front, residence-above" lifestyle collectively constitute Xiaogongyuan's unique urban memory.However, in the course of urban development and renewal, Xiaogongyuan also faces issues such as commercial decline, population loss, spatial homogenization, and a tendency toward over-tourism. Some historical spaces have gradually lost their original living functions, existing merely as scenic historical symbols. This phenomenon bears a certain resemblance to the "discontinuity of daily life" that emerged in German historic districts during the period of modernist renewal.

Consequently, urban memory establishes a shared value foundation between Germany's prudent renewal experience and the renewal practices in Xiaogongyuan. On the one hand, urban memory ensures that the renewal of historic districts goes beyond mere restoration of

architectural character to focus more on the continuity of authentic living scenarios and local identity; on the other hand, it shifts the renewal objective from “spatial reconstruction” to “continuity of life.”This implies that the renewal of Xiaogongyuan requires not only the preservation of arcaded buildings and the street fabric but also the reestablishment of connections between people and space through the revitalization of public spaces, the development of pedestrian and bicycle networks, the continuation of mixed-use functions, and the revival of community activities, thereby enabling the historic district to continue supporting contemporary life.

Urban memory also provides a crucial rationale for this study’s adoption of “prudent urban renewal” as its design approach. Compared to renewal models that emphasize large-scale spatial restructuring, prudent renewal is better suited to complex historic districts like Xiaogongyuan, which still retain a significant amount of historical fabric and resident life. Its emphasis on incremental renewal, minimal intervention, and multi-stakeholder consultation not only reduces the disruption to existing social structures but also preserves space for the continuity of urban memory.Therefore, in this study, urban memory serves not only as a crucial lens for understanding the historical value of Xiaogongyuan but also as a vital bridge connecting Germany’s experience with prudent urban renewal to local practices in Shantou.

2.4.4 Domestic and International Research on Urban Memory Theory

2.4.4.1 Theoretical Research on Urban Memory Abroad

A review of the academic history of memory studies reveals that the concept of “collective memory” was first introduced by the French social psychologist Maurice Halbwachs in his work *The Social Structure of Memory* (1925), in which he brought individual memory into the field of sociology. Subsequently, in his book *On Collective Memory*, he defined it as “the process and result of members of a specific social group sharing the past”(. Building upon the concept of collective memory, German scholar Jan Assmann introduced the concept of “cultural memory” in his book *Cultural Memory*, extending memory theory into the field of cultural studies. He categorized forms of collective remembrance into communicative memory and cultural memory—that is, everyday memory

and festive memory. In *How Societies Remember*, Paul Connerton views performative "commemorative rituals" and "bodily practices" as crucial elements in sustaining collective memory.

In *Spaces of Remembrance*, the German scholar Aleida Assmann further explores the functions of cultural memory and the forms and transformations of its media. She identifies functional memory and archival memory as two modes of remembrance and posits that the media of remembrance include text, image, body, and place[30] .Furthermore, in *History in Memory: From Personal Experience to Public Representation*, she applies the theories regarding memory media proposed in *Spaces of Memory*, discussing several domains for representing history: intergenerational memory, family memory, public architecture, museums, and the media. She also identifies three basic forms of historical representation: narrative, exhibition, and performance.

French historian Pierre Nora analyzed the relationship between history and memory, proposing the concept of "memory sites," which he characterized as having three features: the real, the symbolic, and the functional. In *The Spirit of Place: Toward a Phenomenology of Architecture*, the Norwegian architect Norberg-Schulz focuses primarily on the interpretations of "existential space" and "the spirit of place."At the urban level, Aldo Rossi's *The Architecture of the City* posits that the city serves as a comprehensive vessel for human collective memory; to a certain extent, urban memory reflects precisely this collective memory[31] . In *The Image of the City*, Kevin Lynch examined citizens' perceptions of urban form and defined the mental images of the physical environment in the human brain, comprising five elements: paths, boundaries, districts, nodes, and landmarks.

2.4.4.2 Domestic Theories of Urban Memory

Theoretical research on "urban memory" in China began in the early 21st century and constitutes an important component of "social memory" studies. Based on current research, different countries have adopted varying measures and priorities depending on their distinct cultural contexts and current states of urban development. The following outlines the current state of theoretical research in China:

In 1997, Professor Feng Huiling, in her doctoral dissertation *Possessing New

Memories: A Study on Electronic Records Management*, was the first to combine the concepts of "memory" and "electronic records." She argued that the impact of electronic records was immense, and that changes in recording methods rapidly extended these ripples to all management activities and modes of utilization, thereby proposing a new paradigm for archival studies in the electronic age.Pan Liangen pointed out that the most essential core of the archival memory perspective is that "archives possess the attribute of memory," but the fact that archives possess this attribute does not mean that archives are "memory" itself [32] ;In 2010, Professor Feng Huiling proposed the concept of building "China's Memory" and developing digital resources at the National Annual Conference of Archivists. Building on this, Xu Yongjun recommended that the National Archives of China promptly propose and implement the "China's Memory" Digital Resource Repository Project, designed a basic plan for the project's construction, and outlined the core content of "China's Memory" for the project[30] .Since the concept of "Urban Memory" was first proposed, the Chinese archival community has paid close attention to it. Overall, certain research achievements have been made, particularly as the philosophy of preserving "Urban Memory" has been continuously applied and implemented in practice.

The concept of the "Urban Memory Project" was proposed during the "Historical and Cultural Survey and Protection" campaign initiated by Feng Jicai to "rescue Tianjin's old streets." In 2002, the Qingdao Municipal Archives took the lead in proposing the "Urban Memory Project," and driven by its 示范 effect, cities such as Wuhan, Guangzhou, and Shanghai successively launched their own "Urban Memory Project" initiatives.

In *Cultural Memory and Identity*, Zhao Jingrong focuses on memories integrated into daily life, discussing the memory crisis faced by people in an era of mobility and related issues concerning the "truth," "goodness," "right and wrong," "public domain," and "private domain" of memory.

In *A Study of Memory Sites in Chinese Urban Streets*, Sun Yan conducts localized and concrete research on the theory of urban street memory sites, delving into the alleys and streets of daily life to identify spaces imbued with the memories of the masses and to preserve people's nostalgia for urban streets.

In *Urban Memory and Urban Form*, Zhu Rong elucidates the fundamental theories of

urban memory through theoretical derivation and empirical research, focusing on the temporal perspectives and value orientations of urban memory and urban form. Furthermore, employing an interdisciplinary approach, she conducts an in-depth analysis of the memory elements within urban form, thereby summarizing corresponding principles and strategies for their expression, which serve as a reference for urban historical and cultural preservation and urban design work.In *The City of Collective Memory*, she further discusses the evolutionary relationship between form and memory.

Wang Fei offers important insights into preserving urban memory and the organic renewal of historic districts from the perspective of visitor cognition. By constructing models to summarize patterns of visitor perception, he provides a reference for the planning, design, and management of historic districts[33] .

Through research on the essence of urban memory and preliminary explorations into the construction of an urban memory system, Yu Bo seeks to identify a cumulative approach to urban cultural development. By analyzing the developmental trajectory of urban memory within the historical evolution of the urban spatial environment's significance, and by integrating the developmental history of concepts regarding the protection of urban history and culture, he constructs an urban memory system and establishes a holistic concept for the protection and development of urban history and culture, thereby facilitating more effective renewal and transformation.

2.4.5 Theory and Practice of Urban Memory

2.4.5.1 Theoretical and Practical Applications of Urban Memory at Home and Abroad

The scope of application for urban memory theory is extremely broad, encompassing multiple disciplinary fields and concepts such as urban planning, architectural landscape, cultural heritage, sense of place, and social construction. Within the field of design studies, disciplines including environmental design, product design, and visual communication design can all conduct research based on urban memory theory, thereby opening up new academic pathways and branches of application.Existing research findings primarily focus on urban planning practices, old town preservation and renewal, the protection of historic districts and sites, building renovation, landscape heritage conservation, and urban public art, covering

multi-level applications ranging from macro-planning to micro-spaces. Among these, applications in old town preservation and the protection of historic districts and sites are the most widespread.

In the field of urban planning, the practical application of urban memory theory offers new perspectives for urban conservation and planning, helping cities maintain the continuity of historical memory and cultural heritage amidst rapid development. For example, through strategies for old town renewal, historical districts are preserved and restored, enabling cities to not only meet the demands of modern life but also retain residents' spatial memories of the past. This interconnection between the perception of spatial memory and places of memory contributes to the formation of planning models with a greater emphasis on humanistic care.In the field of old city conservation and renewal, research findings include the preservation of old city memories, street renewal strategies, the revitalization of historic districts, and the conservation and renovation of residential compounds. These studies not only explore how to preserve urban historical memory but also provide concrete renewal strategies to achieve a win-win situation where cultural heritage is preserved and functional renewal is realized.

Representative international initiatives include the "Memory of the World Programme" (MOW) and the "American Memory Program" (AMMEN); domestically, cities such as Hangzhou and Qingdao have launched "Memory Projects." The Qingdao Municipal Archives first proposed the "Urban Memory Project" in 2002. In 2003, a symposium themed "The Memory of the City" was held, marking the nation's first major series of events focused on architectural art and culture.

New York City, USA: 9/11 Memorial Park The 9/11 National Memorial Museum and Memorial Park serve as a prime example of the theoretical and practical application of urban memory in New York City. The design of this space is intended not only to commemorate the victims of the terrorist attacks but also to evoke the public's collective memory of this historical event. Through elements such as the reflecting pool, engraved names, and the memorial plaza, the designers have integrated this tragic history with public memory, creating an urban space imbued with profound emotional significance.

Guangzhou: Preservation and Renovation of the Xiguan Mansions The Xiguan Mansions in Guangzhou are typical examples of Lingnan architecture, featuring strong local

characteristics. In recent years, through the preservation and revitalization of the Enning Road Historic District, Guangzhou has retained the architectural character of these mansions while implementing appropriate functional renovations, transforming the area into a cultural tourism hotspot. By preserving historical memory, the city has revitalized the urban space[34] .

While these specific domestic and international examples possess a certain degree of relevance, the application of urban memory theory is relatively broad. Although many renewal projects have indeed expanded the scope of memory theory in urban conservation and planning, their theoretical application remains superficial. In the design of old town conservation and renewal, research has focused more on spatial memory perception and the coupling of memory and place[35] , among other aspects, failing to fully highlight the advantages of integrating urban memory with culture.

2.5 A prudent Analysis of Urban Renewal Case Studies

2.5.1 Block 118 Renewal

As a pilot project, a key objective of the Block 118 renewal was to validate the economic feasibility of “flexible urban renewal” based on building preservation and improvement. Prior to the renovation, the block contained 415 residential units, approximately 30% of which were vacant. The ground floors of the buildings were predominantly occupied by local shops and other small businesses.Most residents of the block were low-income tenants. After three years of sustained efforts, the Block 118 pilot project was completed in phases by 1980. The original buildings and community structure were preserved, while housing conditions and the living environment were significantly improved; the renovated block provided 382 residential units, with approximately 80% of residents continuing to live there; the project cost was only 64% of that of a demolition-and-rebuild project of equivalent scale.



Fig.2 -5 Model of the Block 118 Preservation and Renewal Plan

(Source: Reference 36)

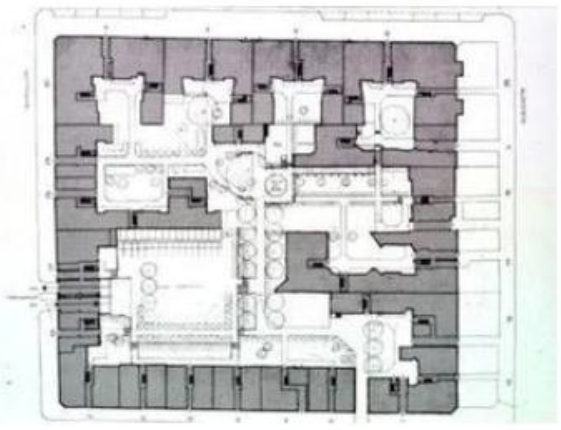


Fig.2 -6 Master Plan of Block 118

(Source: Reference 36)



Fig.2 -7 Location of Block 118 within the Charlottenburg-Klausnerplatz district

(Source: Reference 36)

Renovation Strategy:

1. Adaptive technical renovation. The Block 118 pilot project introduced revolutionary innovations in renovation techniques, with the primary goal of preserving and utilizing existing building structures and components as much as possible while minimizing damage to them during construction.

2. Effective Balance Between Preservation and Improvement. By retaining the main structural framework, floor plans, and facades of most buildings and restoring them in accordance with their original styles, the project achieved the preservation and restoration of

the historic character. Through the municipalization of housing and effective control of post-renovation rent increases, the modernization of living spaces—while prioritizing the housing rights of existing tenants—and the enhancement of the neighborhood's environmental quality represent another highlight of the renewal effort.The inner courtyards—originally dark, cramped, and heavily damaged during World War II—were a key focus of the renovation. By restoring the building facades on one side of the courtyards, renovating the greenery within, and introducing public activity facilities (including sports areas and urban furniture), the inner courtyards—traditionally considered the "back" of the buildings—have become the new "front" of the neighborhood and public spaces for residents to enjoy.

3. Public Ownership of Housing. Utilizing the compulsory acquisition authority granted by law, the government first purchased the privately owned rental housing—which constituted the vast majority of the neighborhood—and, after renovation by the Housing Association, converted it into publicly owned social rental housing. Priority was given to the original residents (tenants), and after comprehensively considering construction costs and residents' financial capacity, the post-renovation rent was set at a level affordable for middle- and low-income residents.

4. Resident Participation. Not only were the renovation design plans and implementation processes determined with respect for residents' wishes, but more importantly, the post-renovation rent standards were the result of joint negotiations with the original residents. Residents (tenants) generally accepted a rent increase of approximately 30% following the improvements.



Fig2 -8 Street View of 118th Street

(Source: Reference 36)

The key features of this project are: (1) Leveraging the mutually reinforcing roles of housing security and urban renewal. A relatively well-developed housing security system was largely the foundation for the success of the Block 118 pilot project. Measures such as public

ownership of housing and rent control ensured the housing rights of low- and middle-income residents during the neighborhood renewal process and preserved the original social structure.Starting with the successful pilot in Block 118, Western nations with social democratic traditions—including Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, the Scandinavian countries, and even Canada—have gradually charted a path for urban renewal that diverges from the “mainstream” approaches of the United States and the United Kingdom. This approach involves the government maintaining appropriate and moderate public intervention in the housing market to promote the close integration of urban renewal and housing security.(2) Achieving a balance between heritage preservation and residential improvement through reasonable public intervention: The preservation and renewal of historic and cultural cities and districts should not involve “museum-style” protection and utilization of cultural heritage, but should instead focus on their significance as actual living spaces for people, thereby developing institutional designs, public policies, and renewal strategies that take into account social, economic, and cultural benefits.(3) Emphasize the economic feasibility of neighborhood renewal[37] and its relationship with institutional and technological innovation. Whether in the preservation and renewal of historic districts or the comprehensive rehabilitation of aging residential communities, it is necessary to avoid overreliance on government investment while also guarding against the misguidance and manipulation of speculative interests (from individuals, businesses, or even the government itself). Even for so-called “dilapidated buildings,” “demolition and reconstruction” is not necessarily the most economically rational approach.Furthermore, the economic viability of neighborhood renewal extends beyond the short- or long-term self-sustainability of capital investment; the stabilization of the community’s demographic structure and the improvement of residents’ living conditions are more conducive to reducing urban operating costs and promoting long-term sustainable economic development.(4) Attention must be paid to the status and role of local small and micro-enterprises in urban renewal; they are not only a source of neighborhood vitality but also an integral part of the urban economy that cannot be overlooked. The 118 Neighborhood Pilot Project therefore treats small and micro-enterprises as key participants in urban renewal, giving them the opportunity to engage in the renewal process and continue to support local life and production.

2.5.2 Community Renewal in Spandauer Vorstadt

Spandauer Vorstadt is located in Berlin's central Mitte district, at the confluence of the Havel and Spree rivers, adjacent to Alexanderplatz. It was named "Spandauer Vorstadt" because it was situated on the outskirts of Berlin during the Middle Ages.Most of its buildings were constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were partially destroyed during World War II, and after the war, the East Berlin government did not prioritize reconstruction efforts in the area, resulting in a large number of buildings falling into disrepair and standing vacant.Prior to the 1990 renovation, 25% of the shops and 20% of the housing stock here were vacant. Even after German reunification, it remained a neglected, dilapidated, and sparsely populated old district; however, the urban fabric and character of Spandau's old town were still well-preserved, retaining a relatively complete picture of Berlin's medieval urban history.The prudent urban renewal process in the Spandau suburb can be broadly divided into three stages: preliminary investigation, research and planning, and implementation. These three stages influenced one another, undergoing several cycles of "research and evaluation—planning—implementation," with public participation throughout the entire process to ensure the sustainability of the renewal and protect the public's fundamental rights[38] . At a glance, the process is not significantly different from the typical approach to old town renewal in China.

The research and planning phase primarily involves analyzing and studying the current conditions and their interrelationships, conducting assessments to identify urban issues and development conditions, and translating these into planning proposals.The primary focus of the plan is to improve living and working conditions, followed by enhancing the urban functions of the district. Taking the 2005 Spandau Suburb Renewal Plan as an example, after more than a decade of renewal, the goal of improving living and working conditions has been largely achieved. Based on the area's cultural context, current conditions, and spatial characteristics, the plan has established a development orientation that integrates tourism, cultural leisure, and mixed-use commercial and residential functions.New renewal objectives have been established: (1) Continue to renovate and restore buildings of historical heritage value, converting them into cultural and public infrastructure; (2) Prioritize the preservation and transformation of streets and sites that embody the city's history; (3) Improve the living

environment to meet new requirements; (4) Preserve cultural values and ensure sustainable use; (5) Support the regional economy and local crafts.

The plan identifies a development strategy centered on the transformation of Hackescher Hof—the most distinctive architectural courtyard space in the entire district—as a catalyst. It emphasizes the renewal and mixed-use of the courtyard's functions, along with strategies to make its spatial attributes more public, to activate the development concept for the entire neighborhood. Specific spatial proposals were developed through public participation.

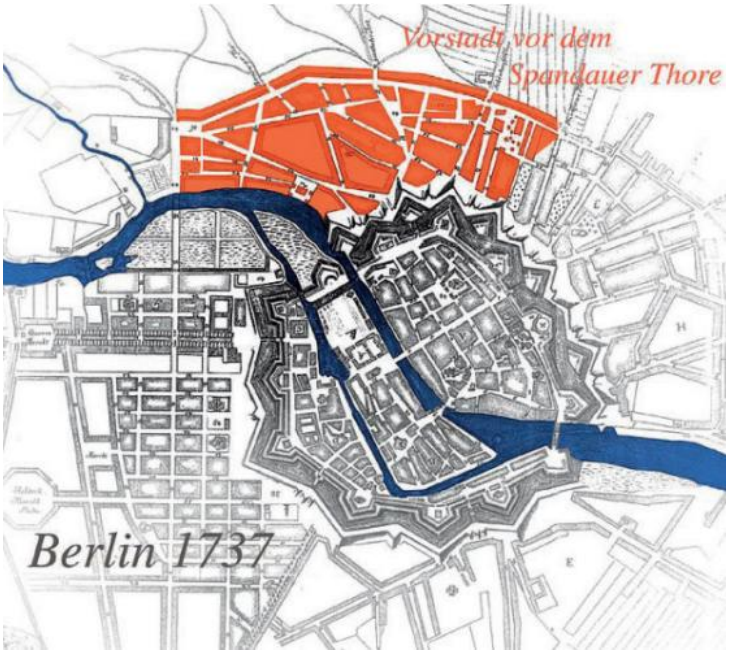


Fig.2 -9 1737 Berlin Plan and Location Analysis

(Source: Berlin-Mitte District Administration)

Renovation Strategies:

（1） (1) Improve the road traffic system using the concept of traffic layering (Fig. 2-9). (2) Continue to renovate and upgrade existing buildings, and refine the list of priority preservation sites. (3) Implement infill development for buildings slated for demolition. (4) Carry out adaptive reuse of buildings with significant damage. (5) Maintain the area's relatively high density overall and preserve the existing mid-rise building heights.(6) Improve sunlight and natural lighting conditions, prioritize human-scale design, and ensure pedestrian accessibility. (7) Clarify the boundaries between public and private spaces, restore traditional streets and squares, establish a public space system, and implement temporary uses for certain

open spaces (temporary use)[39] .

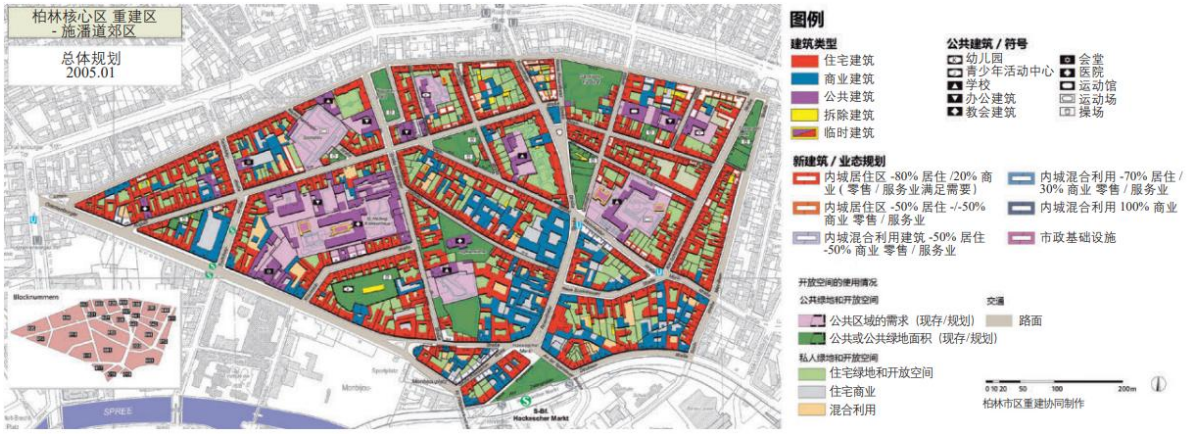


Fig.2 -10 Framework Renewal Plan for the Spandau Suburban Community

(Source: Berlin-Mitte District Administration)



Fig.2 -11 Infill Redevelopment in the Spandau Suburb

(Source: Berlin-Mitte District Administration)



Fig.2 -12 Facade renovation in the Spandau suburbs

(Source: Reference 41)

Once the renewal plan was legally established, the implementation phase began. Previous construction plans were canceled, and relocation proceeded in an orderly manner according to the new plan. The government took charge of public projects and established relevant organizations to manage and facilitate renewal construction by developers and private entities. To date, 191 projects of varying scales have been completed in the Spandau suburb, with total funding amounting to 1.269 billion euros.All projects strive to preserve their historical context as much as possible , restoring buildings and rehabilitating or repurposing their functions to enable them to fulfill modern urban roles. A dedicated project committee is established for each initiative to oversee progress, and comprehensive documentation—including historical background, property owners or developers, supporting policies, designers, and renovation measures—is recorded in the planning files.Today, the Spandau suburb has become a core area for cultural leisure and historical tourism in Berlin. The tertiary sector, centered on history and culture, has developed well; historic buildings have been transformed into cultural spaces. By improving the urban environment, the project has preserved the city's spirit, enriched its culture, promoted economic development, and achieved a multifaceted revitalization.



Fig2 -13 Partial renovation results in the Spandau suburb

(Source: Reference 41)

2.5.3 The Klosterviertel Project at Molkenmarkt

The heart of Berlin's historic center lies between the city railway and the Spree River, with Molkenmarkt serving as a key component of this area. The planning area is adjacent to the Red Town Hall, the Old Town Hall, and the Nikolaiviertel. Within this area are the New Town Hall, the Podwiel Palace, and the monastery ruins. In addition to its buildings, the area is characterized by major traffic arteries.Grünerstraße runs through the historic center, featuring numerous lanes, large intersections, and adjacent parking lots.

Site studies indicate that while there are numerous historic monuments (Red Town Hall, Town Hall, parish church), the area lacks a cohesive urban fabric. Therefore, it is essential to reestablish the site's fabric, creating a neutral standard for development and a backdrop that allows existing monuments to truly showcase their unique charm. The new fabric should integrate the area into the urban layout. The design constructs this fabric in three steps: building massing—alleys and squares—layering.

(1) Building Massing. As a working hypothesis, the designers assume compact building massing with a eave height of 18 meters.

(2) Alleys and Squares. Alleys and squares are carved out of the building mass, forming a secondary system of public spaces: sightlines and pathways do not run straight through the block but converge at a square.The alley width is deliberately set at 5 meters, while the plaza measures at least 15 x 25 meters. These dimensions are derived from the historical remnants of the site (Parochialgasse, Jüdenhof). The alleys and plaza are designed to provide a high-quality living experience, and therefore vehicle traffic is largely prohibited.

(3) Layering. To improve natural lighting and balance room proportions, the fan-shaped volumes gradually tilt toward the center of the block. A new 10-meter-high eave is introduced here. What initially appeared to be a small block is now interpreted as a single large residence. These buildings have become massive, towering Figs facing the street.





Fig.2 -14 Plan changes for Mörken Square, 1910–2029

(Source: Reference 41)

On the spatial level, the plan proposes a multidimensional comprehensive renewal strategy. First, regarding the transportation system, by rerouting and reorganizing Grunerstraße, the plan introduces tram and bicycle systems to achieve multimodal transportation integration. At the same time, a direct connection between Mirendam-Straße and Spandauer Straße is reestablished in the Möckelmarkt area, forming a new intersection node that enhances regional connectivity and mitigates the fragmentation of space caused by traffic.

Second, regarding urban form, the plan adopts a four-to-six-story ring-shaped block structure that integrates diverse functions such as commerce, culture, and residential use. This continuous, enclosed block structure not only helps restore the small-scale spatial characteristics of traditional European cities but also effectively reduces external traffic noise through the enclosure effect of building facades, providing a relatively quiet environment for the internal residential spaces.

Regarding the development of the public space system, the plan proposes a multi-tiered open space framework, including landscaped courtyards, public green spaces, and rooftop gardens. Notably, the areas surrounding the old church cemetery and the monastery church ruins will be integrated into a continuous public green space system, which not only strengthens the connections between historical spaces but also provides the city with a high-quality recreational environment. Simultaneously, the introduction of street greening and rooftop gardens will improve local microclimatic conditions.

Furthermore, the plan emphasizes the integrated utilization of historical heritage and archaeological resources.As large-scale archaeological excavations progress, the city's multi-layered history is gradually being revealed and documented, with significant sites receiving protection and public display. For example, the site of the Jewish cemetery

(Judenhof) on Klosterstraße has been incorporated into a temporary utilization plan; through exhibitions and public displays, these historical resources are transformed into elements of public awareness and cultural education. This “excavation–preservation–display–reuse” strategy achieves the re-embedding of historical heritage within the contemporary city.

In terms of spatial use and street design, the plan transforms certain areas into traffic-calmed zones and strengthens the pedestrian network. For instance, Parochialgasse has been developed into a public thoroughfare, while the Judenhof has been reimagined as a small urban plaza, thereby enhancing the accessibility and livability of these spaces and promoting a pedestrian-oriented urban lifestyle.

Finally, regarding implementation mechanisms, the plan continues to adhere to the principles of participatory design. Architectural designs have not yet been fully finalized but are being developed incrementally through ongoing consultations between the planning department and the community. This open design process demonstrates that urban space is not a one-time outcome but a dynamic process that continuously evolves through the ongoing interaction of multiple stakeholders.



Fig.2 -15 Site plan for the Klosterviertel project

(Source: Senate Department for Urban Development, Building, and Housing)

The area's reorganization will create valuable urban space. Both the street layout and the distribution of building blocks are based on the historical urban fabric of old Berlin. The layout of Klostergasse and Jüdische Gasse, along with the restoration of the historical contours of the Großer Jüdischer Hof and the western extension of Pfarrgasse, provide a guiding framework for the neighborhood.Visual connections between key buildings, such as the Old Town Hall and the Nikolai Quarter, will enhance the character of the neighborhood. Key reconstructions will create a perimeter block with interconnected courtyards to meet the design requirements of modern architecture.

The development of the Molkenmarkt area, following an exploratory phase, has ultimately resulted in the following eight guiding principles. These principles, based on knowledge gathered by the urban community during the first phase of the urban development feasibility study and developed in collaboration with partners, form the foundation and framework for the subsequent participatory planning process.

(1) A living historical site. At Molkenmarkt, new narratives emerge from history, inheriting the old stories and transforming them into new ones.

(2) A District of High Spatial Quality. At Molkenmarkt, inspired by the quality standards of the surrounding areas and stakeholders, the city is redeveloping in a dynamic manner.

(3) A New Berlin Mix. At Molkenmarkt, a forward-thinking, quintessential downtown mixed-use development is taking shape within a resilient, multifunctional building.

(4) Diverse and affordable housing. Molkenmarkt is creating innovative housing types in the affordable housing sector to promote social diversity.

(5) The City Below the Eye Level. Ground-level areas and open spaces serve as connecting zones both within and outside Molkenmarkt, as well as areas that establish links with the wider city.

(6) Cultural Dimension: Diverse cultural uses are central to Molkenmarkt's identity, both during the development phase and in the future neighborhood.

(7) Green Urban District: At Molkenmarkt, climate adaptation measures are being

implemented on both a large and small scale to promote biodiversity in the city center and to ensure construction and operation are ecologically and socially sustainable.

(8) Prioritizing diverse mobility, the Molkenmarkt area is primarily characterized by pedestrian spaces and well-developed bicycle infrastructure, with a significant reduction in private motor vehicle traffic.

The renewal process of the Molkenmarkt area reflects a phased approach to public participation, characterized by a gradual transition from informal engagement to institutionalized planning tools.First, during the exploration phase (2020–2021), the project engaged citizens through pop-up interventions and on-site discussions held around construction fences. Characterized by low-threshold, site-specific interactions, this phase enabled the public to express their intuitive perceptions and needs regarding future urban spaces within real-world contexts, thereby facilitating the preliminary identification of potential site issues and opportunities.

Subsequently, during the 2021 Open Urban Planning and Open Space Design Competition, public participation was further integrated into the formal planning process. In the first phase of the competition, design proposals were made available to the public through information briefings and displays on the construction fencing, encouraging citizens to offer feedback and suggestions. In this process, the public transitioned from merely providing input to becoming an “active contributor” in the design generation process, achieving an interactive coupling between professional planning and public perception.

During the 2022 workshop phase, public participation was further deepened into a collaborative decision-making mechanism. Through specialized workshops, the planning team and city residents discussed the shortlisted proposals, refining and adjusting the design details. This phase marked a shift in the public’s role from “opinion expressers” to “collaborative participants,” reinforcing the social deliberative nature of the planning process.

Ultimately, the Berlin Senate adopted the “Charta Molkenmarkt” (Molkenmarkt Charter Framework Plan) on August 22, 2023.This framework integrates community development needs, existing planning documents (Development Plans Nos. 1–14 of 2016), the 2020/21 Community Development Guidelines, and the outcomes of the 2022 public workshops, forming a systematic body of institutionalized outcomes that includes the framework plan and

a design manual. This system not only provides a basis for subsequent design competitions for individual buildings and open spaces but also signifies the transformation of public participation outcomes from process-oriented inputs into a planning foundation with normative effect.



Fig2 -16 Design analysis diagram for the Klosterviertel project

(Source: Senate Department for Urban Development, Building, and Housing)

2.5.4 Hackescher Höfe, Berlin

The Hackescher Höfe are located at the intersection of Oranienburger Straße and Rosenthaler Straße in central Berlin. Covering an area of approximately 8,300 square meters, the complex spans the entire block from north to south and features entrances on three adjacent commercial streets.The complex was established in 1905 and consists of nine interconnected courtyards with a total floor area exceeding 25,000 square meters, making it one of Germany’s largest courtyard-style mixed-use commercial and residential complexes.

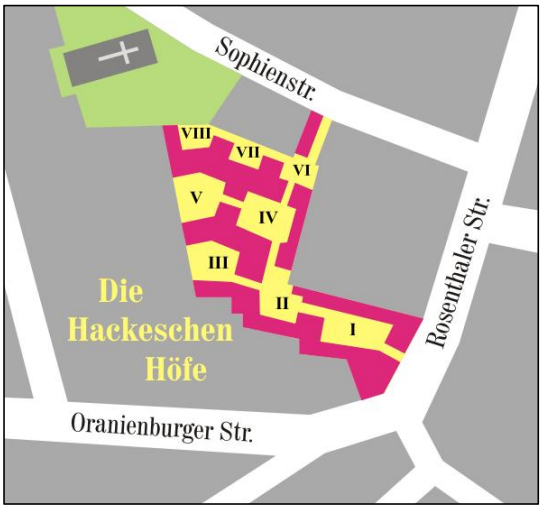


Fig.2 -17 Hackescher Hof Master Plan

(Source: Wikipedia)

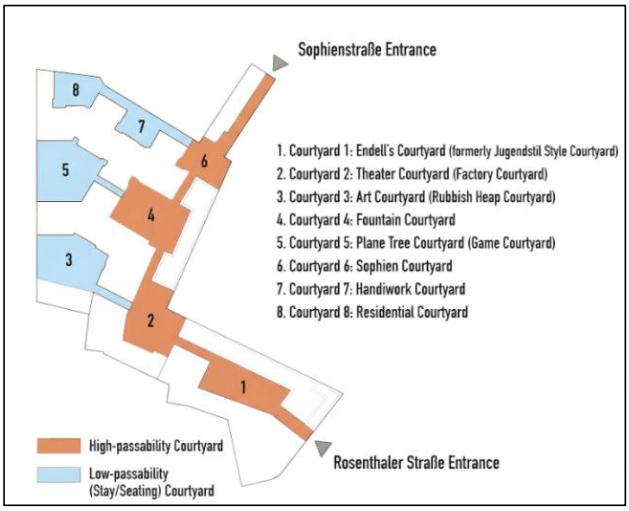


Fig.2 -18 Spatial layout of Hackescher Höfe

(Source: Redrawn based on available data)

Originally conceived as a mixed-use complex integrating commercial, office, entertainment, and residential functions, the project was renowned for its “front-courtyard commercial—back-courtyard residential” spatial model. However, following World War II, it gradually fell into disrepair and became vacant due to economic recession. In 1994, the project was reacquired and underwent a comprehensive renovation through a collaborative effort led by architects Stefan Weiss and Matthias Faust.

The spatial structure of Hackescher Hof centers on a system of interconnected courtyards, creating a layered network of public spaces through nine distinct courtyards. The complex can be divided into two spatial sequences: the first is a U-shaped courtyard sequence oriented toward commercial activities, comprising five consecutive courtyards that gradually guide pedestrian traffic from the external city streets into the interior of the block via walking paths.This sequence offers a distinct “outside-in” spatial experience: beginning with commercial displays in the entrance courtyard, moving through cultural and artistic spaces, then to resting areas centered around fountains and greenery, and culminating in the “Rose Courtyard” as the climactic focal point, thereby forming a complete spatial narrative.The second is the residential courtyard sequence on the west side, consisting of four courtyards. It continues the original residential function and features a quiet, introverted spatial atmosphere. This section emphasizes the improvement of the living environment, creating a community-oriented living space through the restoration of greenery and the provision of children’s activity facilities and rest areas.

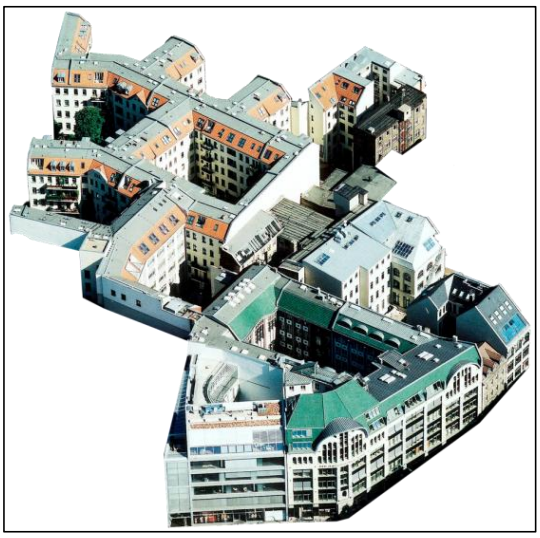


Fig.2 -19 Aerial view of Hackxue Courtyards

(Source: Wikipedia)



Fig.2 -20 Functional layout of Hackescher Hof after renovation

(Source: Redrawn based on available data)

The renovation of Hackett Courtyard exemplifies the characteristics of "prudent urban renewal," with its core strategies manifested in the following three aspects: First, at the physical level, the project fully preserves the original architectural structure and historical character, achieving functional renewal through small-scale, incremental spatial modifications. This approach avoids large-scale demolition and reconstruction, enhancing spatial quality while maintaining the historical fabric.Second, on the functional level, the project continues and reinforces the original "mixed-use" spatial model, expanding the ground-floor space from a single courtyard to the entire block, thereby creating a seamless system of commercial and public activities. At the same time, it introduces diverse functions such as cultural exhibitions, artistic creation, design industries, and dining, making the space more multifaceted and vibrant.Third, regarding spatial operation and social engagement, the project revitalizes the site through cultural activities and public participation. The courtyard features a theater, exhibition spaces, and event venues that continuously host artistic and social activities, transforming it from a mere commercial space into a vital hub of urban cultural life.

From the perspective of urban memory, the renewal of Hack Snow Courtyard is not merely a physical restoration, but rather a reactivation of historical memory through spatial reconfiguration.On the one hand, the project preserves the original architectural forms and spatial structures, ensuring that the historical space continues to serve as a vessel for memory; on the other hand, by introducing cultural activities and creative industries, it transforms the original industrial and domestic settings into contemporary, tangible urban experiences. As a

significant site of memory, the courtyard space not only bears witness to the production and daily life activities of past eras but also, through renewed cultural and commercial activities, continuously generates new urban memories, thereby achieving a transition from “static heritage” to a “dynamic cultural space.”The renewal experience of Hack Snow Courtyard holds significant implications for the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district in Shantou. First, by preserving historical buildings and spatial structures to achieve incremental renewal, it offers a viable path to avoid “large-scale demolition and reconstruction.” Second, by organizing neighborhood functions around public spaces, it strengthens spatial networks and activity connections, playing a crucial role in enhancing neighborhood vitality;furthermore, by integrating cultural functions with commercial activities, it successfully creates a spatial experience with local character, helping to avoid the homogenization often seen in the renewal of historic districts. Therefore, in the renewal process of the Xiaogongyuan area, we can draw on its integration strategy centered on public space. By organizing and revitalizing diverse types of spaces while respecting the historical fabric, we can ensure the continuity of urban memory and the sustainable development of the district.



Fig.2 -21 Rendering of the Hackett Courtyard after renovation

(Source: https://www.travelerluxe.com/article/desc/190002240)

2.6 Subsections of This Chapter

This chapter provides an overview and analysis of the evolution of German urban design, the stance on prudent urban renewal, and research on urban memory. It also

systematically discusses the design stance and methodological foundation of this study in conjunction with the practice of historic district renewal.

First, a review of the development of German urban design reveals that urban renewal in Germany has shifted from the large-scale urban expansion of the industrial era, modernist functional zoning, and post-war “demolition and reconstruction,” toward a renewal path that emphasizes historical preservation, public participation, and social equity.Particularly after the 1970s, as the problems of historical fabric destruction, community disintegration, and spatial homogenization brought about by modernist urban renewal became increasingly apparent, Germany began to rethink the “radical reconstruction” model of urban renewal and gradually formed a stance of “prudent urban renewal” centered on incremental renewal, small-scale interventions, and multi-stakeholder consultation.Its core lies not in establishing a fixed design theory, but in creating a dynamic balance between preserving historical continuity and responding to contemporary needs.

This chapter further analyzes the core values, spatial strategies, and consultation mechanisms of prudent urban renewal. prudent renewal emphasizes incremental renewal, minimal intervention, and social equity; it improves the environment of historic districts through methods such as restoration, patching, adaptive reuse, and the reconfiguration of public spaces; and it coordinates the relationships among the government, the market, and residents through public participation and consultation mechanisms.In this process, space is no longer viewed as a mere outcome of physical construction but as an open process gradually formed through dynamic multi-stakeholder interactions. This approach to renewal offers significant insights for addressing the relationship between preservation and development in complex historic districts.

At the same time, this chapter reviews and organizes the development and practical research of urban memory theory. Relevant studies demonstrate that urban memory is not only a cultural phenomenon but also a crucial internal mechanism that profoundly influences urban spatial structures, sense of place, and public life. Compared to the mere preservation of historic buildings, urban memory places greater emphasis on the enduring emotional connection between people and space, as well as the continuity of everyday life scenarios.At the practical level, urban memory has been widely applied in the preservation of historic

districts, old town renewal, and the creation of public spaces. By sustaining historical spatial structures, preserving public activity settings, and reinforcing local cultural expressions, it establishes a connection between the historical environment and contemporary life. As exemplified by the Berlin IBA initiative, the 118th Block, and the Spandau suburb, “prudent renewal” demonstrates significant advantages in preserving historical fabric, improving living environments, and maintaining community structures.

Building on this foundation, this chapter further analyzes the intrinsic connection between urban memory and prudent urban renewal. Urban memory emphasizes the continuity of social relationships and lifestyles within historical spaces, while prudent renewal provides the spatial and social conditions for this continuity through incremental updates and minimal intervention. The two share a high degree of alignment in their focus on historical continuity, public life, and local identity.For the Xiaogongyuan Historic District in Shantou, which not only possesses a relatively intact arcade street fabric and historical spatial structure but also retains certain living attributes and community relationships, prudent urban renewal is more suitable as the design approach for this study than renewal methods that emphasize comprehensive reconstruction.

Chapter 3 Development History and Cultural Evolution of the Shantou Xiaogongyuan treaty port district

3.1 Location of the Shantou Xiaogongyuan treaty port district

Shantou's Xiaogongyuan, the commercial and cultural center of Shantou's old city, serves as a core landmark and cultural symbol of the historic city. In a narrow sense, Xiaogongyuan refers to the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion located at the heart of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district. In a broader sense, it encompasses the neighborhoods surrounding the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion, including Anping Road, Shengping Road, Guoping Road, and others, collectively known as the Xiaogongyuan Historical and Cultural District.The arcades and streets of the Xiaogongyuan area are largely modeled after Parisian urban layouts, radiating out in a fan-shaped pattern. Combined with the historic neighborhoods of "Si Yong Yi Shengping" on both sides, the former "Yantingtou" to the east, Hongting to the north, and "Shantou Port" to the south, this area has formed a bustling commercial and residential district characterized by 1930s architectural style.

3.2 The Development History of the Shantou Xiaogongyuan treaty port district

As a key spatial entity in China's modern treaty port cities, the development of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district in Shantou profoundly reflects the complex interplay between an export-oriented economy, institutional change, and the restructuring of urban space. Viewed within the broader context of historical evolution, the district has undergone a dynamic process of transition from prosperity to decline and, ultimately, toward revival. To more clearly reveal its phased characteristics, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of its development at both the macro and micro levels.Based on existing literature and key historical milestones, the development of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district can be divided into three major phases: "Prosperity and Development—Renovation and Development—Preservation and Renewal." These encompass six consecutive periods: the nascent stage, the formative stage, the heyday, the stagnation period, the decline, and the revival.



Fig.3 -1 Map of the Shantou Xiaogongyuan Area

(Source: Official documents of Shantou Xiaogongyuan)

3.2.1 Prosperous Development Phase

The Prosperity and Development Phase (1860–1949) was a period during which the spatial form and urban functions of the Xiaogongyuan area were gradually established and reached their peak, comprising three developmental stages: the nascent period, the formative period, and the heyday[43] . This phase began with the opening of Shantou as a treaty port, marking the start of the region's transition from a traditional society to a modern city.During the nascent period (1860–1901), Shantou was integrated into the global trade network thanks to its superior port conditions. Urban development began to break through the traditional regional economic framework, gradually forming a spatial structure oriented toward foreign trade. Leveraging its coastal location and port transportation, the Xiaogongyuan area became a hub for early commercial activities, and the embryonic form of the city began to emerge.Upon entering the Formative Period (1901–1926), with the substantial inflow of overseas Chinese capital and the continued expansion of foreign trade, the spatial structure and commercial system of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district were further refined. On the one hand, the traditional network of streets and alleys stabilized through continuous adjustments, with street systems such as "Si Yong Yi Shengping" and "Si An Yi Zhenbang" gradually establishing a spatial framework with distinct local characteristics;on the other hand, the involvement of the overseas Chinese community in terms of capital, technology, and culture not only drove the construction of commercial facilities but also fostered the integration of diverse cultures, resulting in an urban landscape with distinct characteristics of

a hometown of overseas Chinese. During this period, the district had developed a relatively complete urban functional system, yet it also revealed underlying issues such as lagging infrastructure and aging physical spaces.

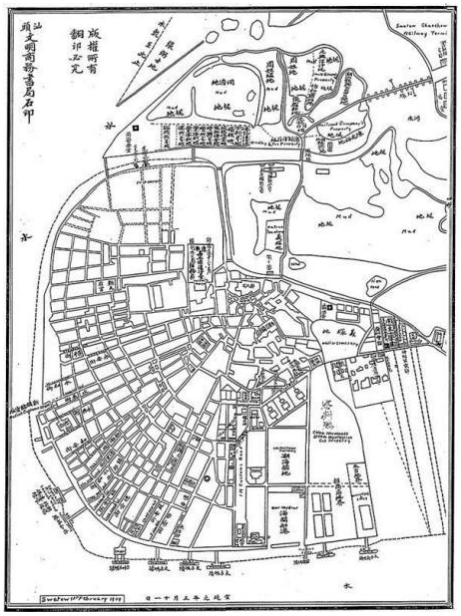


Fig.3 -2 Shantou Xiaogongyuan 1909 Master Plan

(Source: Illustrated History of Shantou)

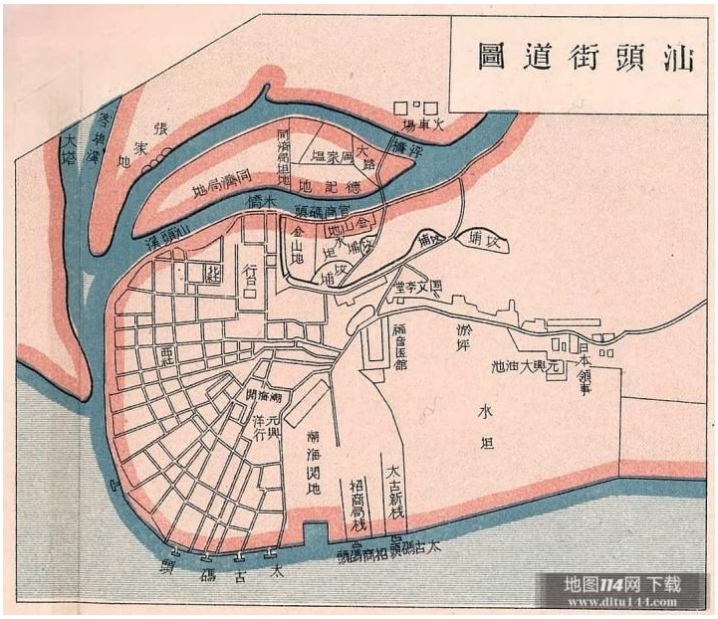


Fig.3 -3 General Plan of Shantou Xiaogongyuan, 1917

(Source: https://www.ditu114.com/ditu/379.html)

The period of prosperity (1926–1949) marked a phase of comprehensive development for the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district under systematic urban planning interventions. The urban renewal plan proposed in 1926 integrated and optimized the existing street fabric by introducing a road system combining radial and grid patterns, gradually establishing a spatial structure centered on the central square.Architecturally, arcades served as the primary street-front form, not only adapting to the Lingnan climate but also reinforcing the continuity of commercial spaces. Simultaneously, foreign architectural styles such as Baroque, through a process of localization, blended with local culture to form a unique urban character[44] .Economically, overseas Chinese investment and the prosperity of maritime trade further drove the diversification of commercial formats, establishing Xiaogongyuan as a regional hub for commerce and culture. This period marked not only the peak of the district's physical development but also a time when its urban spirit and cultural characteristics were most highly refined[45] .

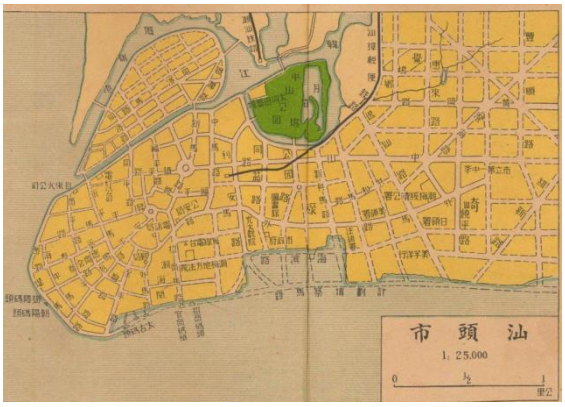


Fig.3 -4 General Plan of Shantou Xiaogongyuan, 1930

(Source: Photographed by the author at the Shantou Port Opening Cultural Exhibition Hall)

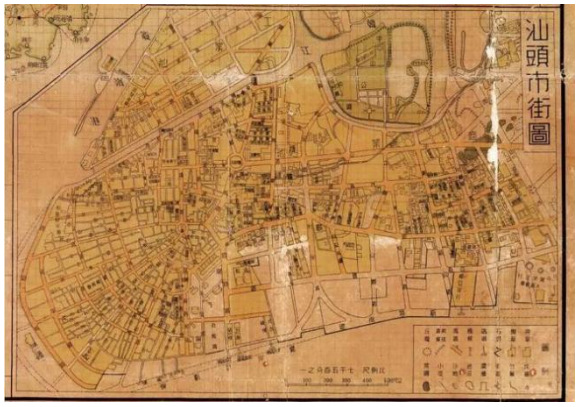


Fig.3 -5 General Plan of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan, 1948

(Source: Photographed by the author at the Shantou Port Opening Cultural Exhibition Hall)

3.2.2 Renovation and Development Phase

The stagnation and decline periods within the Renovation and Development Phase (1949–2016) marked a critical stage during which the Xiao Park area transitioned from prosperity to decline and underwent multiple rounds of renewal attempts. During the stagnation period (1949–1981), although the area retained a certain status as a commercial center in the early years of the People's Republic of China, its development gradually slowed due to institutional changes and the macro-policy environment.Adjustments to land and property rights systems undermined the original spatial order to some extent, while the lack of effective mechanisms for building maintenance and renewal led to the gradual deterioration of the physical environment. At the same time, due to factors such as regional development policies and restrictions on external exchanges, the area's original advantages in an export-oriented economy could not be sustained, and its development momentum weakened significantly.Upon entering the decline phase (1981–2016), with the establishment of special economic zones and the restructuring of the urban spatial framework, the focus of Shantou's urban development shifted toward new districts, and the Xiaogongyuan area gradually became marginalized.During this period, the demographic structure underwent significant changes: middle- and high-income groups moved out, while the proportion of low-income and elderly residents increased, further exacerbating the area's decline. In terms of renewal efforts, the government attempted to improve living conditions through urban renewal projects, employing methods such as partial demolition and the construction of new housing; however,

the overall strategy prioritized physical renewal while neglecting the preservation of historical value.After 2000, although the renewal philosophy gradually shifted toward "conservation-oriented development," aiming to drive the district's revitalization through the transformation of cultural resources, practical implementation was hindered by issues such as broken funding chains, complex property rights, and multi-stakeholder conflicts. This led to the stalling or even failure of some projects, resulting in the destruction of historical spaces and renewal outcomes falling short of expectations. It can be said that this phase was a period in which various structural contradictions came to the fore, and the limitations of traditional development models were fully exposed.



Fig.3 -6 Aerial view of the core area of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan

(Source: https://www.swatow.net.cn/article/detail/603)

3.2.3 Preservation and Renewal Phase

The Preservation and Renewal Phase (2016–present) corresponds to the Revival Period and marks a crucial turning point in the Xiao Park District's transition from decline to regeneration. During this phase, historical and cultural value has gradually become a core resource for urban development, and the approach to renewal has shifted from a development-oriented focus to one that equally emphasizes preservation and revitalization.The government strengthened policy guidance, promoting the comprehensive restoration and functional restructuring of the historic district through systematic planning and phased implementation. At the same time, the broad participation of social organizations, experts, scholars, and the public has characterized the renewal process as a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort.In practice, through the restoration of iconic spaces such as the Sun

Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion and the arcade district, as well as the construction of cultural exhibition halls and intangible cultural heritage experience spaces, the Xiaogongyuan area has gradually regained its public character and cultural vitality. Furthermore, the introduction and regular operation of traditional festive activities, such as the Yingge Dance, have strengthened local identity while enhancing the area's social influence and appeal.

3.2.4 Characteristics of the District's Evolution

Since its opening as a treaty port in modern times, the Xiaogongyuan Treaty Port Area in Shantou has undergone an evolutionary process from being the city's core to experiencing decline, and gradually moving toward revival. During this long-term development process, some early architectural remnants have vanished over time and are difficult to trace in their entirety; however, the radial spatial layout centered on the Sun Yat-sen Pavilion has generally been preserved, forming an important foundation for the district's historical structure.Although its functional role has undergone multiple transformations over time—from a commercial center and urban core to an old city space and finally to a historic and cultural district—the neighborhood as a whole has maintained a relatively stable developmental logic. This continuity stems, on the one hand, from the spatial structure established by early planning, and on the other hand, is closely linked to the deep-rooted commercial and cultural traditions of the Chaoshan region, enabling Xiaogongyuan to sustain a spatial form where commercial and residential functions are intertwined over the long term.

Throughout its spatial evolution, although the street and alley network has undergone multiple rounds of adjustments and functional enhancements—and even experienced periods of decline and localized disorder—the overall urban fabric has never been fundamentally disrupted[46] .On the contrary, renewal practices across various historical phases have primarily taken the form of incremental optimization based on the existing structure. That is, in response to the social needs and urban development priorities of different eras, local adjustments and enhancements were made to the functional layout within the neighborhood, thereby achieving adaptive spatial renewal while preserving the historical fabric. This development path of "renewal through continuity" reflects the structural resilience and cultural continuity of the Xiaogongyuan area amidst historical transformations.

Taken as a whole, the development and evolution of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district is not merely a process of change in urban spatial form, but rather the result of the combined effects of development drivers, the institutional environment, and social structures. During the period of prosperity and development, an export-oriented economy and overseas Chinese capital served as the primary drivers; during the phase of renovation and development, institutional transformation and urban spatial reorganization became the dominant factors, though they also gave rise to structural contradictions; and during the phase of preservation and renewal, cultural value and public participation gradually emerged as the new foundation for development.The evolution of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district exhibits distinct characteristics of phased progression and path dependence. Its transition from "trade-driven—policy adjustment—culture-oriented" provides a representative case study for understanding the renewal of historic urban districts.

3.3 Neighborhood Evolution under Memory Theory

3.3.1 The Evolution of the Physical Landscape

The physical landscape of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan treaty port district is not only a constituent element of the urban space but also a carrier of historical memory and sociocultural heritage. From the perspective of urban memory theory, the district's historic buildings, block fabric, street network, and spatial layout constitute an "urban memory field," embodying the accumulated layers of Shantou's commercial, cultural, and social life since the city's opening to foreign trade in modern times.To preserve this historical memory, the current conservation plan strictly adheres to the "One Core, Two Districts, Thirty-Three Blocks" framework. Through the comprehensive preservation and revitalization of core landmarks, historic districts, the fabric of the city blocks, and the road system, it ensures the symbiotic continuity of the physical landscape and urban memory.

（1） Historical Core and Landmark Buildings

The historical core of the district, represented by the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion, Laoma Temple, and the Zhang-Chao Guild Hall, forms a crucial spatial node marking the origins of Shantou. The Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion serves not only as the spatial center of the commercial district but also as a focal point for historical public activities and local folk

customs, embodying the memories of Shantou's modern urban life, social gatherings, and cultural rituals;Lao Ma Gong, as a center for religious and community activities, embodies the continuity of clan traditions and folk beliefs in the Chaoshan region; the Zhang-Chiao Association Hall, meanwhile, documents the influence of overseas remittances on the local economy, culture, and architectural styles. The preservation and restoration of these landmark buildings are not merely about repairing physical spaces; they also serve to reawaken the collective memory of residents and visitors regarding the city's history and social life, transforming the historic core into a platform for cultural identity and public engagement.

The Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion, the Department Store, and the arcade complex are the most representative physical landmarks of the Xiao Park area. Their development was concentrated during the region's period of prosperity and growth, carrying significant memories of the area's commercial flourishing and cultural identity. Among these, the arcades lining the streets best reflect the commercial vitality and social lifestyle of that era.Architecturally, Shantou's arcades blend Chinese and Western styles, interweaving commercial and residential functions with exquisite ornamentation. They are not only adapted to the humid, hot, and rainy climate but also embody the local cultural character cultivated over a century as a commercial hub. Consequently, these physical remnants are not only central components of the district's spatial layout but also vital vehicles for residents' historical memories and socio-cultural identity[47] .

However, the "Cultural Revolution" and the subsequent period of decline inflicted severe damage on the district's physical space. A large number of buildings deteriorated or even suffered hazardous damage due to lack of maintenance; landmark structures fell into disrepair or were reduced to their supporting frameworks; and the original fabric of commercial streets was severed and replaced by modern high-rise residential buildings, disrupting the district's overall historical continuity.The failure of the government's early conservation-oriented development plans further exacerbated this rupture in historical memory. According to the "Survey Report on the Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District by the Shantou Old City Office," as of 2013, there were a total of 2,588 dilapidated buildings within the district, with Category III structures—those with structurally compromised main frameworks—accounting for approximately 51.11% of the total, indicating that the carriers of

historical memory within the space had suffered severe erosion.

（2） Historical and Cultural Districts

The Xiaogongyuan area is divided into two historical and cultural districts: the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion District and the West Dike District. The Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion District is the birthplace of Shantou's modern urban development; its core radial layout and traditional street blocks from the early days of the port's opening embody the historical continuity of the city's spatial form.The inner alleys, public squares, and street-front commercial facilities within the district document the daily lives and commercial activities of residents, serving as vital repositories of urban memory. The conservation plan emphasizes the restoration of the central five-star radial layout, the district's facades, and traditional street blocks, while encouraging the introduction of businesses related to the dissemination of traditional culture—such as folk culture experiences, handicraft exhibitions, and innovative cultural industries—thereby enabling the district to preserve its historical memory within a modern functional framework.

The Xidi District stands as a significant witness to Shantou's century-long history as a commercial port. The area's fan-shaped radial layout, continuous arcades, and orderly street blocks reflect urban construction practices and advanced urban management models from the late 19th to the mid-20th century. These spatial elements not only carry the historical memory of commercial activities but also embody the continuation of the Chaozhou-Shantou "spirit of commerce" within the urban fabric.During the process of preservation and revitalization, by maintaining the neighborhood's original commercial street fabric, the character of the street arcades, and the configuration of open spaces, while simultaneously introducing modern commerce, innovative industries, and public service functions, the integration of historical scenes with contemporary urban life is achieved, ensuring the continuity of urban memory.

（3） Block Fabric and Road System

The 33 city blocks in the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district form a spatial structure interwoven with circular and radial frameworks. This layout reflects the city's characteristic orientation toward the sea during the early colonial period and serves as the spatial foundation for residents' daily lives and commercial activities. The 88 traditional alleys within the blocks have survived to the present day, retaining their original orientation, scale, and street-front

character, and serve as important carriers of residents' social memories and spatial cognition.During the renewal and revitalization process, the plan recommends the appropriate restoration of lost inner alleys in the next phase of renovation to strengthen historical continuity. The 22 traditional thoroughfares within the district are categorized by their architectural character into arcaded streets, streets with traditional facades, and other roads. The alignment, spatial scale, and architectural character of arcaded streets and streets with traditional facades are strictly protected to preserve the historical spatial order and commercial atmosphere of the streets;other roads will be renovated in the long-term renewal phase in accordance with traditional architectural styles to extend the overall spatial texture of the district. This "dual-texture" structure—the interweaving of main thoroughfares and inner alleys—not only maintains the spatial continuity of the district but also carries the collective memories of residents, ensuring that the Xiaogongyuan neighborhood retains traces of historical life amidst modernization.

(4) Preservation of Architectural Character and Continuation of Urban Memory

Within the framework of urban memory theory, the preservation and renewal of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district is not merely the restoration of physical space, but also the re-enactment of socio-cultural and historical identity. Through the systematic protection of core landmarks, the block layout, the fabric of the streetscape, and the road network, the district's historical memory is awakened and sustained; simultaneously, through the introduction of cultural activities, commercial enterprises, and public services, historical spaces interact with modern urban life, allowing urban memory to be transmitted and experienced in daily life.The Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion, arcades, and traditional street blocks are not merely physical spaces; they are also vital carriers of residents' perceptions, social interactions, and cultural identity, providing a solid foundation for the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district to become a hub for urban cultural heritage and social memory.

According to the results of a survey on residents' emotional connections to different types of landscapes in the Xiaogongyuan area[48] , the preservation of core buildings within historical spaces is a key factor in awakening residents' collective memory and strengthening their attachment to the place; ritual cultural sites also serve as important emotional bonds for residents by hosting traditional activities. Meanwhile, cultural exhibition facilities primarily

serve as windows for non-local residents to understand and experience the area's historical life.In contrast, time-honored shops and certain traditional folk activities, as they were mostly transplanted through later planning, have weaker connections to the life memories of original residents and thus play a limited role in emotional attachment.

From the perspective of urban memory theory, this data validates the central role of core historic buildings in sustaining collective memory and social identity: historic buildings not only carry information about physical space but also form strong emotional connections through the accumulation of long-term use, social interactions, and cultural activities.Although ordinary residential streets and alleys are relatively modest in scale and form, their continuity and imprints of historical life make them important touchpoints for residents' memories; whereas cultural elements that were transplanted or newly constructed later primarily serve symbolic or educational functions and cannot replace the central position of the original historical spaces in collective memory.



Fig3 -7 Old photo of Nansheng Department Store
(Source: https://www.swatow.net.cn/article/detail/603)



Fig.3 -8 Scale of roads and buildings
(Source: Self-photographed + self-drawn)

3.3.2 The Evolution of Cultural Context

(1) Social Structure and Lived Memory

During the Republican era, the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district developed rapidly thanks to foreign investment and overseas Chinese capital. The arcaded streets were lined with shops and bustling with people, forming a city memory dominated by commercial culture. The spaces of this period not only supported economic activities but also shaped a social network centered on trade and exchange.After 1949, with the transformation of the

private property system, the original commercial spaces gradually converted into residential spaces, and the district evolved into a mixed-use urban center integrating residential living with the distribution of goods. Residents formed close-knit neighborhood relationships within the streets and alleys, and through activities such as temple rituals, they continued local cultural traditions. The focus of urban memory shifted from “commercial interaction” to “daily life.”

However, the restructuring of the urban spatial fabric following the Reform and Opening-up led to the gradual decline of the Xiaogongyuan area, with a massive outflow of residents, leaving the population predominantly composed of migrants and the elderly.These demographic shifts eroded the close-knit neighborhood ties of the original “familiar-face society,” causing the lived memories formed through daily interactions to fade. The area temporarily became a marginalized urban space. Notably, however, ritual spaces—represented by the Tin Hau Temple—remained vibrant, demonstrating that religious and folk activities, as “deep-seated cultural memories,” possess strong stability and continuity amidst social structural changes.

（2） The Layer of Cultural Memory in a Fusion of Chinese and Western Elements

The unique radial road network of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district constitutes its most distinctive spatial feature. It is said that this layout drew inspiration from the 12 radial streets surrounding the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, forming a composite structure of “radial + ring + grid” centered on the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion, with main roads radiating toward the port and curved secondary roads complementing them.This spatial form not only originated from the practical needs of modern urban transportation and port connectivity but has also, through long-term use, become internalized as residents’ spatial cognitive framework, serving as a vital component of urban memory. Although traditional alley systems such as “Si’an Yizhenbang” and “Siyong Yishengping” were repeatedly fragmented and compressed during later renovations, the overall spatial framework has been preserved, demonstrating the “memory resilience” of the historic district at the structural level[49] . Furthermore, the arcade architecture in Xiaogongyuan is a quintessential product of the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures. Its mixed-use spatial model not only responds to the demands of commercial activities but also reflects the socio-cultural characteristics of the Chaoshan region, which

“values commerce and prioritizes residential living.”In terms of facade style, arcade buildings blend traditional Chinese architectural components with classical Western elements, giving rise to diverse types such as Chinese-style, Western-style, and Sino-Western hybrid styles. Among these, the Eastern Guangdong-style arcade—which integrates local craftsmanship with Western ornamentation—is the most representative. This coexistence of diverse styles is, in essence, the result of cultural exchange and local adaptation against the backdrop of modern global trade, and it constitutes a significant source of the district’s visual memory.

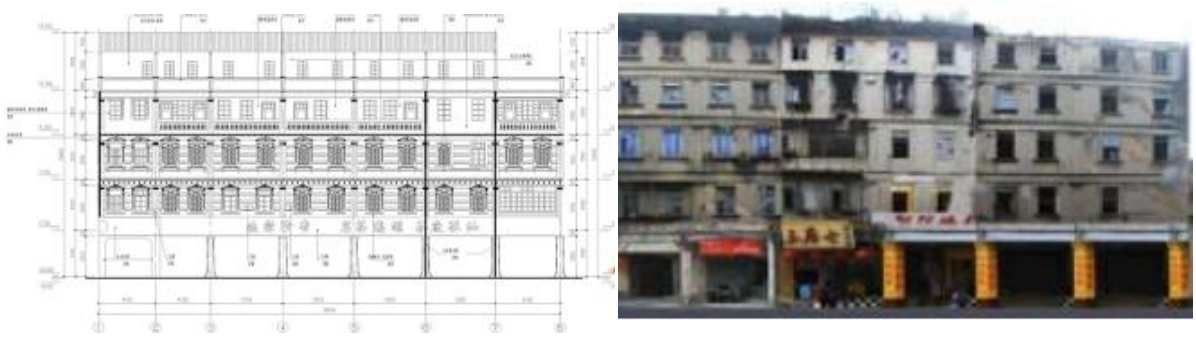


Fig3 -9 Restoration of Arcades and CAD Modeling

(Source: Reference 49)

Over the course of long-term historical evolution, arcaded buildings have continuously intertwined with local cultural memory through their adaptation to climatic conditions and the integration of commercial and residential functions, forming urban spaces with enduring vitality. These structures not only document socio-economic activities across different historical periods but also, through daily use and intergenerational transmission, have become important vehicles for collective memory.Behind every arcade building often lies a concrete and vivid historical story, elevating it beyond a mere physical structure to become a narrative-rich cultural vessel.For example, the story of the Xiao family of Shantou—who obtained the secret recipe for “Changchun Medicinal Wine” after rescuing a high-ranking monk, and had the plaque “Xiao Guang Feng Tai” inscribed by the top imperial examination scholar Hua Shikui—clearly illustrates the historical trajectory where local commercial development and cultural heritage intertwine. Such cases demonstrate that the arcade buildings in the Xiaogongyuan area not only possess irreplaceable historical uniqueness but also form a vital foundation for sustaining urban memory and local identity; their preservation and transmission are of great significance.



a）原址老店　b）华世奎亲笔题字“萧广丰泰”　c）历史悠久的商标

Fig.3 -10 Cultural Tangible Heritage

(Source: Reference 49)

（3） Perceptual Memories of Materials and Decorative Details

The arcades of Xiaogongyuan extensively utilize local materials such as water-washed stone, oyster shell lime, red brick, and wood. Their color palette, dominated by gray, white, red, and warm yellow, creates an overall simple, elegant, and unified street texture.Coastal-specific materials such as oyster shell lime not only reflect local construction techniques but also reinforce the connection between the architecture and the natural environment. On the decorative level, stucco, brick carvings, and various traditional patterns are widely used in the facade details. These motifs often symbolize good fortune and prosperity, reflecting the value orientations of a commercial society while also constituting an important part of residents’ daily visual experience. It is precisely these detailed elements that transform the architecture from mere spatial entities into cultural symbols that can be perceived and remembered.

While current conservation and renewal efforts have restored the physical space to some extent, the reconstruction of the socio-cultural fabric remains relatively limited[51] . Renewal approaches centered on festive events and cultural exhibitions have, to a certain degree, revitalized the area’s symbolic memory; however, since some elements were introduced later, a disconnect exists between them and the original lived experience, making it difficult to fully replace the locally rooted memory that emerged historically.In contrast, “native carriers of memory”—such as arcade architecture, alleyways, and religious sites—remain the core foundation for sustaining local identity. The evolution of the cultural context in the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district illustrates the transfer and reconstruction of urban memory across different carriers: shifting from spatial memory centered on commercial activities to social memory grounded in daily life, then experiencing a rupture in memory

caused by population mobility and spatial fragmentation, and finally achieving the gradual reactivation of memory through preservation and renewal.This process demonstrates that the renewal of historic districts is not merely the restoration of physical spaces, but rather the reconstruction and reproduction of multi-layered urban memory, the core of which lies in maintaining the intrinsic connection between “authentic lived experience” and “spatial continuity.”

3.4 Subchapters of This Chapter

This chapter takes the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district in Shantou as its subject of study, systematically examining its developmental characteristics across three dimensions: historical evolution, spatial structure, and cultural context.In the temporal dimension, through an analysis of the three developmental stages of the Shantou Xiaogongyuan treaty port district, this chapter reveals the area’s overall evolutionary trajectory—from its emergence as a treaty port, through development and prosperity, to functional decline, and finally to preservation and renewal—clarifying the differences and continuities in developmental drivers, spatial forms, and social structures across these stages.

On the spatial level, focusing on the “one core, two zones, and thirty-three blocks” landscape structure, the study analyzed key historical landmarks, historic cultural districts, and the fabric of streets and alleys. It noted that although the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district has undergone multiple renovations and functional transformations during its long-term evolution, its overall spatial layout and radial road network system have been preserved, demonstrating strong structural stability and historical continuity.At the same time, the arcaded streets—as the district’s most representative physical landscape—form a unique urban character through their mixed-use spatial model, architectural language blending Chinese and Western elements, and continuous street facades.

On the cultural level, drawing on urban memory theory, the study conducted an in-depth exploration of the evolution of the district’s cultural context. The research indicates that the urban memory of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district has shifted from commercial memory to lived memory, experiencing a certain degree of discontinuity during the city’s decline, and gradually undergoing a process of reactivation during the conservation and

renewal phase.Core historic buildings, traditional alleys, and ritual spaces serve as key carriers of memory, playing a vital role in sustaining local identity and emotional connections. However, certain cultural elements introduced later struggle to replace the status of indigenous spaces within collective memory.

Overall, the development of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district is not merely a matter of the replacement of physical spaces but reflects the comprehensive evolution of social structures, economic models, and cultural identity. The analysis in this chapter indicates that the preservation and renewal of historic districts should be grounded in the synergistic continuity of spatial form and urban memory, focusing not only on the restoration of the physical environment but also on the reconstruction of socio-cultural structures, thereby providing a theoretical foundation and practical basis for proposing targeted renewal strategies in the future

Chapter 4 Study on the Current Status and Problem Analysis of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district

4.1 Approach to District Delineation

For a long time, the Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District has been regarded as an organic whole. With the implementation of the 2017 “Protection Plan for the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area of the Shantou Special Economic Zone,” the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area has been planned and managed in accordance with the zoning standards for Historic and Cultural District Protection Zone 1. To further strengthen the construction and management of the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area’s Historic and Cultural District, a value-oriented planning approach has been adopted.

In 2020, the Shantou Municipal People’s Government defined the boundaries of the Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District based on the boundaries of the neighborhood’s environmental coordination zone. That same year, capitalizing on Shantou’s application for designation as a National Historic and Cultural City, the district was redefined in accordance with the latest national standards and the “Measures for the Recognition of Historic and Cultural Districts, Famous Towns, and Famous Villages in Guangdong Province,” grounded in research on the historical and cultural preservation and heritage value system of the entire Shantou region.

The protection scope of the 2017 "Protection Plan" was largely delineated based on the boundaries of contiguous areas of historical heritage, with riverside and coastal zones included only within the environmental coordination zone. In 2021, while maintaining the boundaries of the environmental coordination zone, the construction control zone was appropriately expanded toward the urban waterfront to strengthen the protection of the integrity of the city’s macro-level traditional layout and historical visual axes.It can be observed that the city’s development history comprises two significant phases—"natural growth" and "modern construction"—each marked by distinct historical milestones. First, in 1860, the year the port was opened, the city naturally grew through commercial activities, forming the basic layout of "South Port, North City," with the city’s coastal boundary defined by the "natural shoreline," which roughly coincides with the current Yongping Road.Second, driven by the pursuit of greater commercial interests after the port’s opening, the city accelerated its expansion primarily through land reclamation. During the Republic of China era, urban planning and overseas Chinese investment promoted modern municipal infrastructure development. Consequently, the city’s coastal boundary became dominated by

an “artificial shoreline,” with Xidi Road serving as the boundary in 1949. Differences in urban planning philosophies resulted in distinct urban textures and characteristics on either side of Yongping Road.The “Si Yong Yi Shengping” area replaced the original “Old Market” at Laoma Palace to become the city’s commercial and trade hub. The former city center east of Yongping Road fell into decline for a time, but with the implementation of urban renewal plans, the area around the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion evolved into a five-star, radial urban public activity center, giving rise to large department stores, teahouses, and other consumer and entertainment venues.The functional sectors of the central and peripheral areas are both clearly divided and mutually interdependent. The Shantou Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District is divided into two contiguous historic and cultural districts by “Yongping Road,” namely the “Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion District” and the “Xidi District,” and was designated as part of the third batch of Guangdong Provincial Historic and Cultural Districts in July 2021.

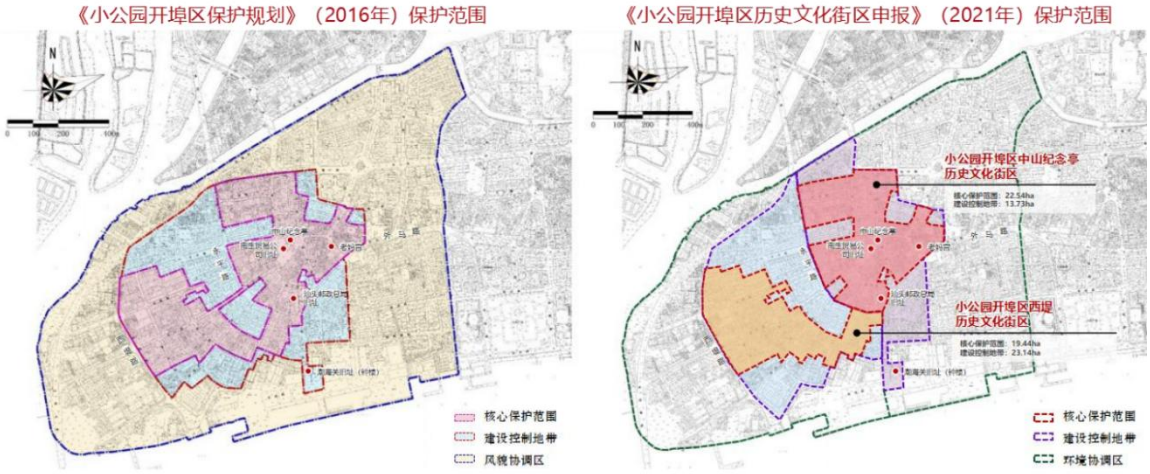


Fig4 -1 Changes in the Scope of the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area Conservation Plan
(Source: Redrawn based on official documents)

4.2 Analysis of the Current Status of the District

4.2.1 Land Use Layout Plan

Building upon the overall framework of the original Port Opening Area conservation plan, this plan systematically optimizes the district’s land use layout while respecting its historical fabric and existing functions. It adheres to the principles of “conservation first, mixed-use development, revitalization, and sustainable development.” By rationally adjusting the land use structure, introducing diverse functions, and improving public and commercial service facilities, the plan enhances the district’s overall vitality and appeal, thereby promoting the organic revitalization of the historic district.At the same time, the plan

emphasizes the development of a public space system. By increasing open spaces such as green areas and plazas, it provides residents and visitors with multi-level venues for activities, thereby enhancing the quality and public nature of these spaces.

Regarding development controls, the plan maintains existing conservation and regulatory requirements, strictly limiting construction activities that negatively impact the historical environment. It explicitly prohibits the construction of new industrial facilities and storage sites involving explosive, flammable, radioactive, or other hazardous materials within the district, and no new industrial enterprises will be introduced. For existing industrial facilities that do not meet conservation requirements, a phased and orderly relocation strategy is proposed to minimize disruption to the historical district's character and functions.

Based on the overall spatial structure and functional zoning characteristics of the district, four key sub-areas surrounding the core zone have been selected for targeted planning guidance:

（1） Nansheng Department Store Area: Historical Commercial Exhibition Zone. As the core of the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area, this zone stands as a vital testament to the most prosperous phase of Shantou's modern commercial development.The plan aims to recreate the historical character of the "Century-Old Commercial Port," focusing on the development of leisure retail, cultural exhibitions, artistic experiences, and distinctive accommodations. By enhancing key public space nodes such as the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion Square and integrating the development of the Anping Road Commercial Pedestrian Street, the plan seeks to create a mixed-use commercial and cultural space that seamlessly blends historical display with modern consumer experiences.

(2) Wufu–Guoping North Area: Old Town Lifestyle Experience Zone.This district is guided by the creation of lifestyle experience spaces with local characteristics, emphasizing the integration of Chaoshan culture into the spatial design. The plan aims to create a neighborhood environment rich in the vibrancy of daily life and cultural atmosphere through the optimization of public spaces and the incorporation of cultural facilities. By combining the construction of a tourism service center with the reconstruction of the Daguan Garden Theater, cultural experience functions will be strengthened. Furthermore, Guoping Square will be leveraged to establish the district's gateway image, enhancing the overall spatial recognition and appeal.

(3) Laoma Palace—Cunxin Charity Hall District: Folk Culture Experience Zone. This district clusters typical Chaozhou-Shantou folk architecture, represented by Laoma Palace and Cunxin Charity Hall, serving as a vital hub for the Mazu faith and charity hall culture.The

plan centers on the preservation and revitalization of traditional folk culture. By integrating existing historical resources, it aims to create spaces with a rich folk cultural atmosphere. In terms of functional layout, the plan prioritizes folk tourism and cultural experiences, focusing on the development of a folk-themed square and related cultural activity spaces to enhance the area's cultural distinctiveness and experiential value.

(4) Yongping—Customs Compound Area: Port Opening History Experience Zone. As a key component of the traditional street and alley system known as "Si'an Yizhenbang," the Yongping area possesses significant historical and cultural value. The plan uses the development of Yongping Road as a demonstration street as a starting point, leveraging exemplary renewal to drive the protection of surrounding historic buildings and industrial development, thereby establishing a replicable renewal model.The Customs Compound District, leveraging the former Chaozhou Customs site and cultural heritage resources related to overseas Chinese remittance letters, will focus on creating a cultural exhibition space showcasing Shantou's history of opening to the outside world. Concurrently, improvements and functional upgrades will be implemented along Wai Ma Road, introducing tourism service facilities to enhance the district's service infrastructure.

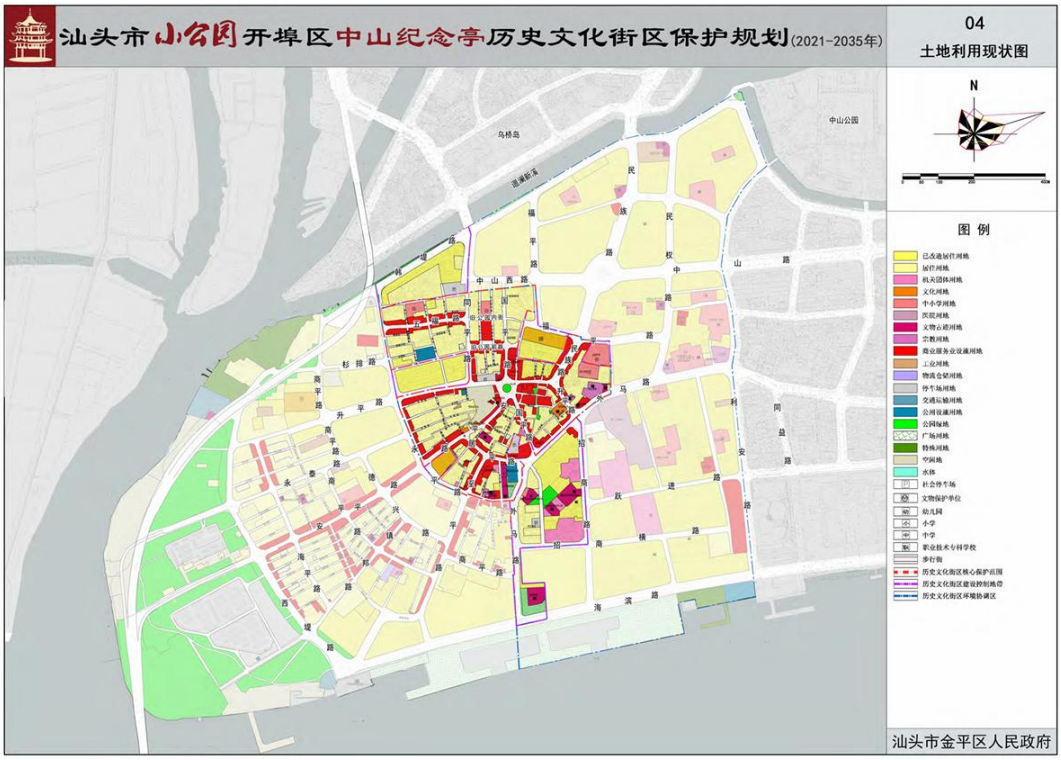


Fig:4 -2 Detailed Protection Plan for the Zhongshan Memorial Pavilion Historical and Cultural District in the Small Park Opening-Up Area

(Source: Shantou Municipal Bureau of Housing and Urban-Rural Planning)

The entire neighborhood consists primarily of residential land and historic site land,

with the historic site land comprising arcades, which have now been restored. Along the west bank, the area consists of industrial and warehouse land, currently occupied by abandoned factories. The Category III residential land has become dilapidated, and some original residents still live on this land.

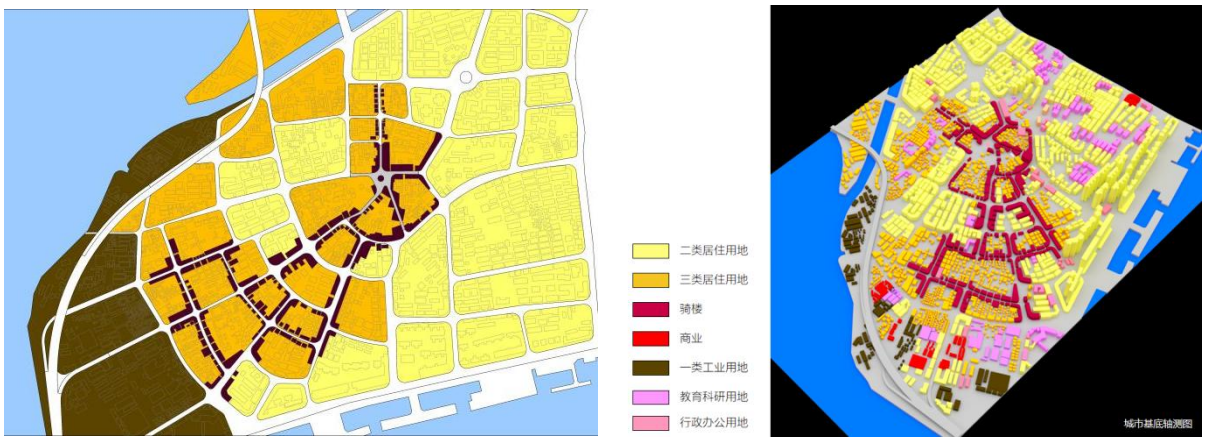


Fig4 -3 Analysis of Residential Land in the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area
(Source: Self-drawn)

4.2.2 Block Traffic Analysis

To enhance the spatial quality and user experience of the Little Park Settlement District's historic neighborhood, the plan adopts a "pedestrian-first" approach to systematically optimize the area's traffic organization, establishing a people-oriented transportation system centered on walking. Based on spatial characteristics and the distribution of historical resources, the area is divided into three tiers: the core pedestrian zone, mixed-use streets, and pedestrian streets, forming a well-structured, functionally complementary slow-traffic system.

First, the core pedestrian zone is bounded by historic roads such as Yongping Road, Waima Road, and Shengping Road. It encompasses the area with the highest concentration and most significant value of historical and cultural heritage, covering a total area of approximately 28 hectares. This zone prioritizes pedestrian activity and strictly restricts motor vehicle access. By optimizing paving, improving street facades, and creating public spaces, a safe, continuous, and user-friendly pedestrian environment is established, thereby enhancing the overall spatial perception and cultural atmosphere of the historic district.

Second, streets with mixed pedestrian and vehicular traffic are primarily located on major thoroughfares surrounding the core pedestrian zone and serve as vital links connecting the interior and exterior of the district. While ensuring basic traffic functionality, the plan prioritizes non-motorized travel. By optimizing road cross-sections, enhancing the continuity of pedestrian spaces, and improving traffic organization, it provides a safer and more

comfortable environment for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles, achieving a balance between traffic efficiency and spatial quality.

Third, the pedestrian street system is structured around key historic roads such as Guoping Road, Shengping Road, Anping Road, and Haiping Road, with a total length of approximately 2,500 meters, forming the most representative slow-traffic spaces within the district.This system is primarily pedestrian-oriented, permits non-motorized vehicles to be pushed, and imposes strict restrictions on motor vehicles. Among these, five arcaded streets radiating outward from the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion (including the northern and southern sections of Guoping Road, the eastern and western sections of Shengping Road, and Anping Road) lead directly to the historic wharf, forming a radial arcaded street system with distinct local character.In addition, arcaded streets such as Wufu Road, Tongping Road, Minzu Road, and Waima Road collectively form a comprehensive pedestrian network, linking the district's major public space nodes and serving as vital linear corridors connecting historical spaces with urban activities.

Building on this, the traditional alley system within the district serves as a vital corridor for residents' daily travel, complementing the arcaded streets.These alleys not only serve daily transportation needs but also connect historical buildings and public space nodes distributed within the neighborhood, making them a vital component in maintaining the spatial continuity of the district. However, the existing alley system still has shortcomings in terms of traffic accessibility, the quality of spatial interfaces, and environmental improvements, and urgently requires systematic review and optimization[52] .

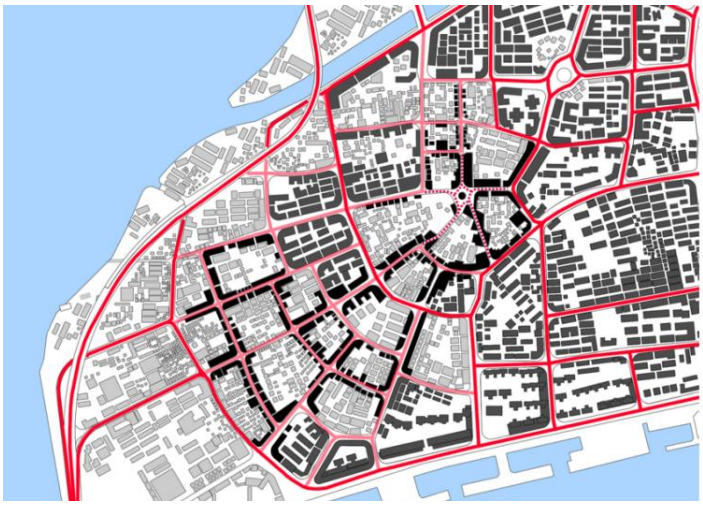


Fig.4 -4 Traffic Flow Analysis Map of the Xiaogongyuan Port Area

(Source: Self-drawn)



Fig.4 -5 Classification of Core Streets in the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area

(Source: Official Shantou Xiaogongyuan Master Plan)

4.2.3 Analysis of Neighborhood Green Spaces

The core area of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan suffers from a relative scarcity of public green spaces with well-developed recreational functions. The existing green space system as a whole exhibits the characteristic of "appearing sufficient in quantity but lacking in actual functionality." Influenced by historical development and urban renewal processes, the area has developed a mix of street-level green spaces and scattered open spaces of varying sizes and scales.However, most of these green spaces were not created through systematic planning but rather emerged as "negative spaces" resulting from the demolition of historic buildings, long-term neglect leading to collapse, or stalled urban renewal projects. In the absence of effective management and functional integration, some sites have gradually evolved into self-generated green spaces with some vegetation cover; however, their spatial quality and practical value remain limited.

In terms of current usage, such green spaces are commonly subject to encroachment by temporary activities, such as unauthorized parking, the storage of municipal equipment, and temporary land occupation. This has weakened their public character, hindering their ability to fulfill their intended functions as places for rest and recreation. Furthermore, due to the absence of comprehensive design and spatial integration, these green spaces suffer from significant shortcomings in landscape continuity, accessibility, and environmental quality, failing to form an effective public space system.

As the conservation and revitalization of the Xiaoguan Historical and Cultural District progresses, the spatial vitality of the area is gradually increasing. In the future, the return of residents and the growth of tourist traffic will place higher demands on public recreational spaces. Against this backdrop, the existing green space structure—which is primarily "passively formed"—can no longer meet the needs of mixed-use activities. There is an urgent need to transform these spaces into public resources with clear service functions through systematic reorganization and functional restructuring.

Based on location, spatial enclosure, and scale, public green spaces within the core area of Xiaogongyuan can be categorized into two types: regional parks and neighborhood-level parks. Regional parks primarily include the idle green space west of Nansheng Department Store, the idle green space east of Anping Road, and the parking lot green space north of Shengping Road. These spaces are relatively large and have the potential to be integrated and upgraded into comprehensive public activity venues;Neighborhood-level parks, on the other hand, include the Ancient Well Park in front of Magong, street-side green spaces along major thoroughfares, and small-scale open spaces within residential blocks created by the removal of buildings. These green spaces are more closely integrated into daily life and serve as important venues for neighborhood interaction and recreational activities.

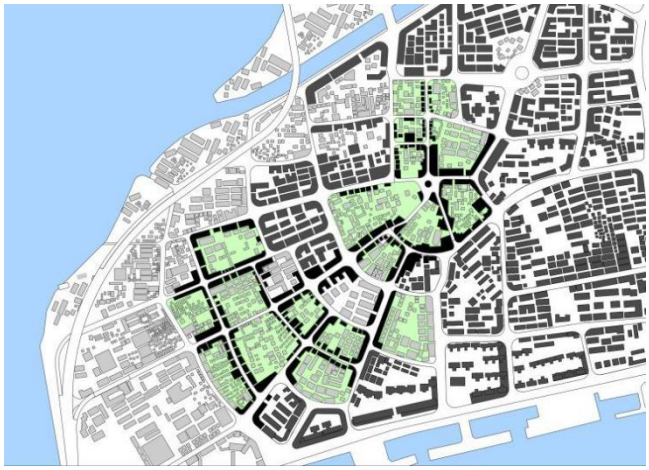


Fig.4 -6 Analysis of Green Space Distribution (Source: Author's own drawing)



Fig.4 -7 Vacant lot on the east side of the Nansheng Department Store block (Source: Author's own photograph)

4.3 Preliminary Analysis of the Nansheng Department Store Block

The Nansheng Department Store Block is situated in the core area of Shantou's Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District, occupying a central position within the entire Xiaogongyuan area. The site unfolds in a fan-shaped layout and adjoins the west side of the Xiaogongyuan Pavilion, endowing it with significant spatial and locational value.The block preserves important historical buildings with distinctive period features, such as the Nansheng

Building, while fully maintaining the arcade street frontage and traditional street fabric. It is a vital component of the historical character of the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area. Currently, the surrounding area experiences high foot traffic, with relatively concentrated commercial and tourism activities, providing a solid foundation for renewal and significant development potential.

The selection of the Nansheng Department Store Block as the pilot site for this renewal design is primarily based on the following considerations. First, there are a significant number of dilapidated buildings within the block, with some structures severely deteriorated; the overall spatial environment urgently requires renovation and reconstruction, indicating a strong practical need for renewal.Second, large-scale demolition and construction projects from past eras have left behind a significant amount of vacant land within the area, providing considerable design flexibility and opportunities for experimentation in the subsequent integration of public spaces, optimization of spatial organization, and implementation of incremental renewal strategies.Finally, the Nansheng Department Store Block is situated at a key node within the core area of Xiaogong Park. Its renewal will not only directly improve the spatial quality of the core district but also drive the coordinated development of surrounding plots through a demonstration effect, thereby forming a progressive renewal path that expands from a focal point to the broader area. This renewal approach—which prioritizes key areas and gradually expands outward—is also more aligned with the principles of progressiveness, sustainability, and holistic coordinated development emphasized by “Prudent Urban Renewal.”



Fig.4 -8 Map of arcades surrounding the site

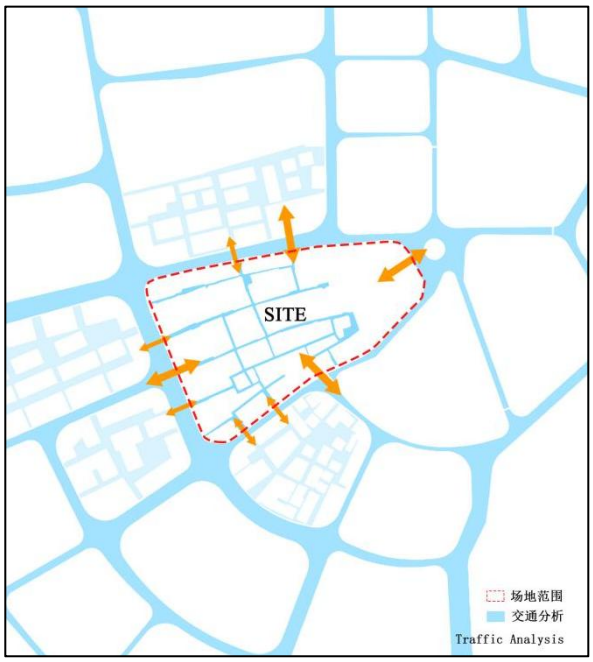


Fig.4 -9 Transportation Analysis Map of the Site

(Source: Author's own illustration)

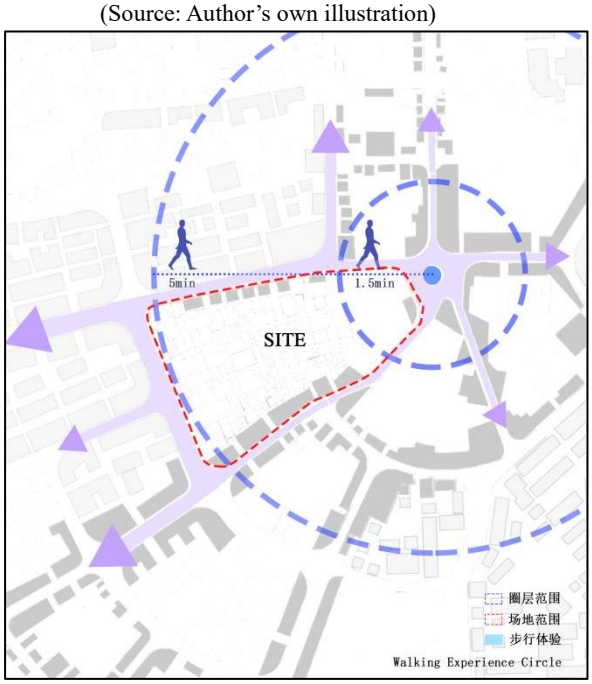


Fig4 -10 Walking Circle Map of the Small Park Center
(Source: Author's own drawing)

(Source: Author's own illustration)

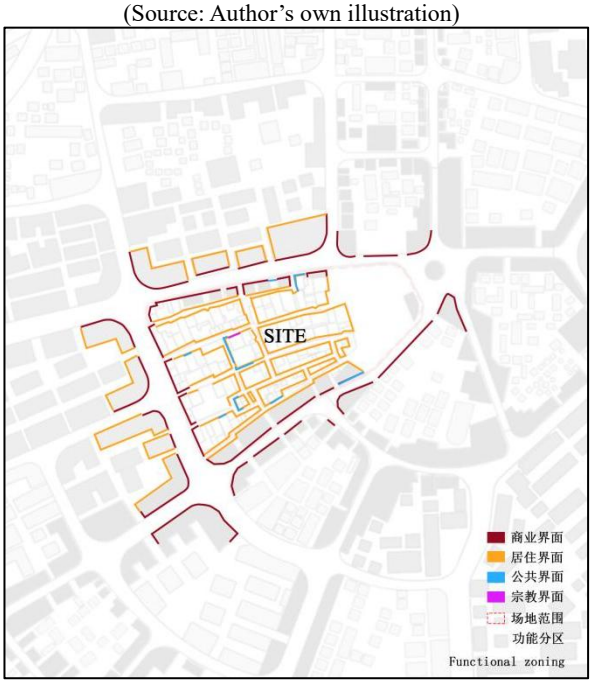


Fig.4 -11 Functional Zoning Map of the Site
(Source: Author's own drawing)

（1） As the Nansheng Department Store district is located in the core area of Xiaogong Park, arcade buildings are relatively concentrated (see Figs 4–8), and most have already been renovated and upgraded. The arcade facades primarily extend along Anping Road on the southern side of the site. This road is also one of the main tourist routes in the Xiaogong Park area, offering high foot traffic and visibility.The continuous arcade space not only preserves the historical character of the traditional neighborhood but also forms a relatively complete pedestrian commercial façade, enhancing the street's spatial continuity and fostering an atmosphere conducive to public activities.At the same time, some arcades within the site exhibit localized breaks or setbacks, creating several entry spaces leading into the interior of the block. These entrances serve as spatial transitions from the main external streets to the internal alleys, facilitating the integration of internal public spaces with the alley network and laying the foundation for enhancing the connectivity and openness of the block's internal spaces in future renewal projects.

（2） There are numerous connections between the interior of the block and the surrounding road network (see Fig 4-9), forming a composite transportation network composed of inner alleys, small-scale streets, and peripheral arterial roads. The overall spatial structure continues the urban layout characteristic of the Xiaogongyuan area, which radiates outward from the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion as its core. The street and alley system extends gradually from the core area to the periphery, forming permeable connections with the surrounding roads through multiple alleys.The Nansheng Department Store block retains a

rich array of traditional inner alley spaces. These alleys not only serve daily circulation functions but also act as vital links connecting the block's internal public spaces with external commercial streets.Multiple entrances, exits, and spatial nodes exist between the block and major peripheral roads such as Anping Road, allowing pedestrian traffic to move freely between the main thoroughfares and the internal alleys, thereby enhancing the overall accessibility and fluidity of the space. This spatial organization—radiating from the core to the periphery and permeating from the main streets into the inner alleys—also reflects the continuity and openness of the traditional urban fabric of the Xiaogongyuan Historic District.

（3） In terms of pedestrian circulation, the Nansheng Department Store District maintains strong walkability with the core area of Xiaogong Park. Taking the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion in Xiaogong Park as the center, the distance to the southwest edge of the site is approximately 300 meters (see Fig 4-10), with a walking time of about 4 to 5 minutes, placing it well within the high-frequency pedestrian activity zone of Xiaogong Park's core area.Given the compact scale of the district and the dense network of streets and alleys, visitors and residents can quickly reach the interior of the site via arcaded streets and internal alleys. Consequently, the Nansheng Department Store District is not only a vital component of the core tour route in Xiaogong Park but also serves as a key transitional zone connecting the peripheral neighborhoods with the core landscape nodes.Good pedestrian accessibility enables the site to accommodate the overflow of foot traffic from the core area, and also provides a solid foundation for subsequent public space development, optimization of the pedestrian and bicycle system, and enhancement of the neighborhood's vitality.

（4） In terms of the relationship between the site and surrounding functional zones, commercial functions are primarily distributed along the outer main streets, particularly concentrated along streets with high tourist traffic such as Anping Road, forming a relatively continuous commercial activity belt. In contrast, the distribution of commercial functions within the block is relatively scattered, with small-scale commercial activities existing only at specific nodes; most of the space remains primarily residential, presenting a typical traditional neighborhood layout characterized by "commerce on the front streets and daily life in the back alleys" (see Fig 4-11).Overall, the site has relatively few public interfaces, and there is a shortage of open public spaces, resulting in limited vitality and dwell time within the internal streets and alleys. At the same time, the site still retains spatial nodes with local cultural attributes, such as religious buildings, which not only serve religious functions but also, to a certain extent, sustain the daily social interactions and local identity of the neighborhood residents. As important cultural carriers of the historic district, these religious spaces play a

significant role in preserving the site's urban memory and living atmosphere

4.4 Current Issues in Urban Renewal

4.4.1 Historical Legacy Issues Arising from the Failure of "Conservation-Oriented Development"

Since the reform and opening-up, the Xiaogongyuan Historic District has been a target of old-city renovation. From the late 1970s to the 1990s, well-funded state-owned enterprises demolished old structures and built new ones, constructing a large number of multi-story employee dormitories.

After 2000, the area became a "cash cow" for the government's land-based fiscal revenue, with numerous high-rise real estate development projects springing up along the waterfront.In 2004, influenced by Shanghai's "Xintiandi" development model, the Shantou Municipal Government decided to launch the renovation project for the Xiaogongyuan Historic Architectural Conservation Area. The essence of this project was to maximize profits by repurposing historic buildings, constructing 仿古建筑 (replica historic buildings), and replacing residential use with commercial use; the goal was to transform the Xiaogongyuan Historic District into a large-scale commercial district integrating commercial, cultural, tourism, leisure, and residential functions.

In 2006, Shantou Yousong Real Estate Development Co., Ltd. won the bid for the land use rights to approximately 8.13 hectares in the core area of Xiaogongyuan for a total land price of 306.575 million yuan.The project's estimated total investment (including demolition and construction costs) was approximately 1.2 billion yuan. It was Shantou's first old-city renovation project to separate the roles of the demolition contractor and the developer and to relocate all original residents to alternative housing with property rights retained.As agreed, the Jinping District Government was responsible for the demolition work. However, due to an underestimation of the initial demolition compensation costs, the project collapsed just six months after it began due to "a shortage of demolition funds and delays in land handover." The first phase of the renovation project was launched in March 2003, but by 2011, only approximately 0.78 hectares of land had actually been cleared and handed over.

Amid the large-scale demolition and construction, the Xiaogongyuan development project in Shantou became a stalled construction site, leaving a neighborhood rich in historical and cultural resources scarred and devastated.

Over the past decade, the core area of Xiaogongyuan has effectively become a "ghost town"; within the renovation zone, fenced off with corrugated iron sheets, weeds have run

rampant, leaving the landscape desolate. Although the Shantou municipal government repeatedly attempted to resume work during this period, all efforts were stalled due to failed funding negotiations.

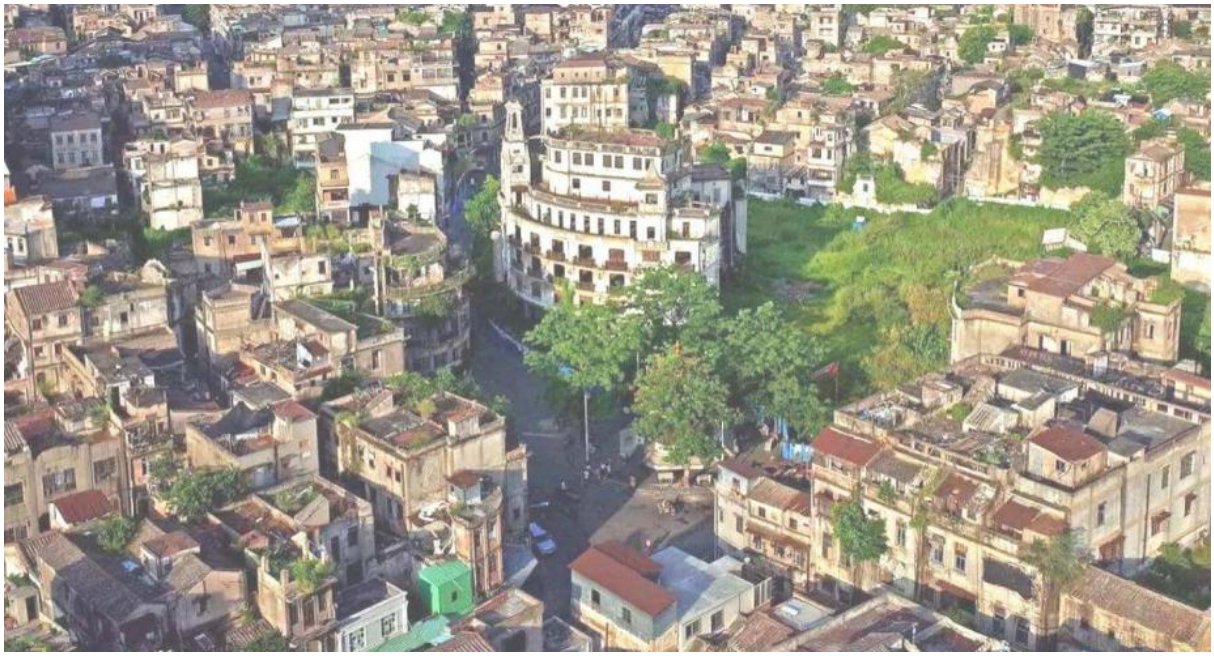


Fig:4 -12 Scenes of the "ghost town" in Xiaogongyuan from 2004 to 2012
(Source: Hunan Provincial Architectural Design Institute)

4.4.1.1 Amid a dynamic multi-party bargaining process

Starting in 2000, the local government began introducing market forces, primarily real estate developers, to continue advancing the area's renewal and transformation. By converting the original residential functions into commercial functions that blend fashion, consumption, and historical culture, the government aimed to enhance the area's value and land revenue[50] .Following market entry, the government, through planning and land concessions, not only reduced renewal costs but also generated fiscal revenue, leading it to favor a cooperative strategy; developers, anticipating substantial profits from the Small Park site development, tended to adopt a participatory renewal strategy; and property owners, able to use compensation for their property rights to purchase new homes and relocate to areas with well-developed amenities and comfortable living environments, also chose a cooperative strategy, resulting in a game equilibrium.

However, driven by profit maximization, market actors in urban renewal prioritize low-cost (with simple property transaction processes) and high-return (with prime real estate development locations) plots for "large-scale demolition and reconstruction" projects. Sparsely populated areas have become the primary targets for market-driven development (mainly commercial residential projects), while densely populated central blocks—which

truly require renovation—are met with non-cooperative strategies.Although local governments attempted to attract market investment in the core areas by intervening to undertake demolition work, the urban renewal of the Xiaogongyuan Opening Area once again fell into a predicament due to the highly fragmented and frequently transferred property rights within the district, which made it impossible to resolve the issue of property rights exchange. Following the large-scale demolition and reconstruction driven by market forces, the urban landscape of the Xiaogongyuan Opening Area has been fragmented, its historical and cultural heritage destroyed, and the public interest compromised.

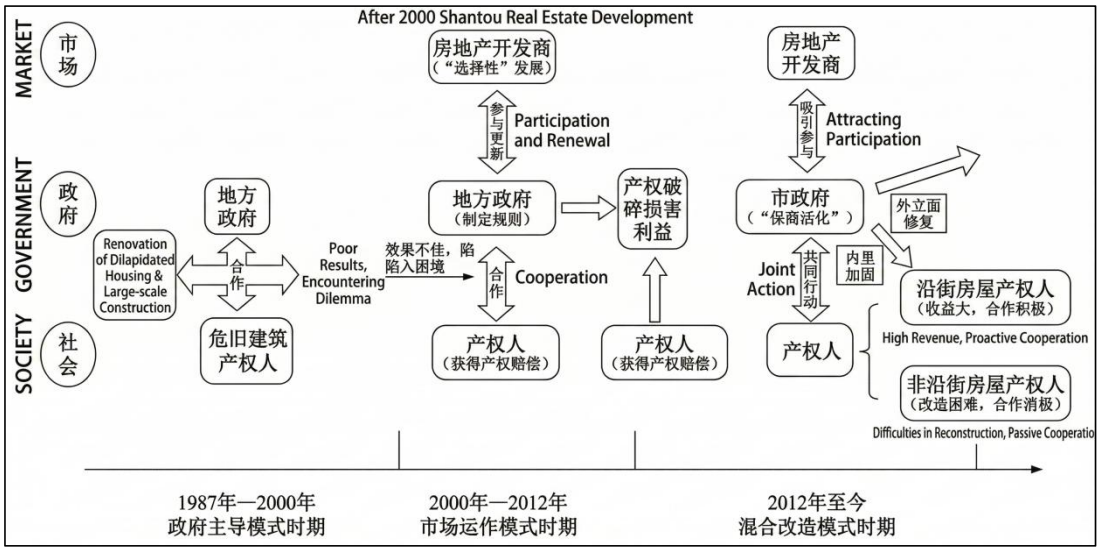
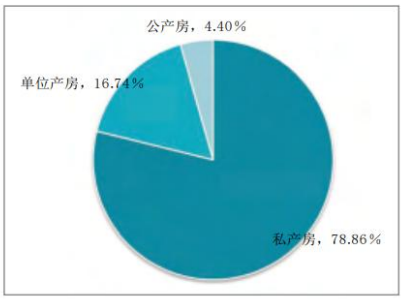


Fig.4 -13 Diagram of Property Rights Relationships
(Source: Reference 50)

To address developers' tendency to "cherry-pick" projects in urban renewal—which leads to resource waste through redundant construction in "hotspot" areas while "coldspot" areas with urgent renovation needs remain unaddressed—developers' behavior can be regulated through comprehensive district-wide development rather than isolated renovations, thereby promoting the overall improvement of the area.Regarding developers' non-compliant practices—such as high-intensity development and lowering standards for supporting facilities—supervision must be strengthened to prevent it from becoming a mere formality and to avoid collusion between the government and developers.



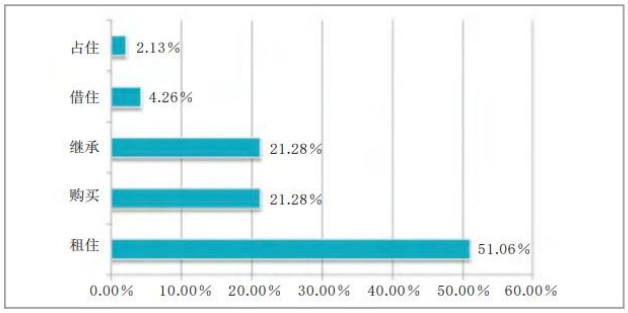


Fig.4 -14 Analysis of Property Rights and Local Resident Conditions
(Source: Reference 50)

In recent years, the preservation and renewal of the Xiaoguan Park area has gradually shifted toward a collaborative governance model characterized by government leadership and multi-stakeholder participation[52] . Within this new framework, the government no longer focuses solely on economic returns but places greater emphasis on balancing public interest with cultural value;public participation has significantly increased, with the public playing an increasingly vital role in articulating spatial needs and cultural identity; designers, through professional intervention, translate these diverse demands into concrete spatial strategies. In this process, the dynamics of the game have shifted from being driven by singular interests to the coordination of diverse values, and the foundation of cooperation has expanded from "profit maximization" to a comprehensive consideration of "cultural continuity—spatial quality—social equity."

Consequently, compared to the market-led cooperative equilibrium of earlier stages, the current multi-stakeholder collaborative process has, to a certain extent, mitigated the negative impacts of overdevelopment. This has shifted the renewal of historic districts from mere spatial reconstruction toward a multidimensional, comprehensive revitalization encompassing "physical, social, and cultural" dimensions. This transformation is reflected not only in the refinement of renewal objectives but also in the shift of urban governance models from an efficiency-oriented to a value-oriented approach, marking a gradual improvement in the balance between preservation and development in the Xiaogongyuan area.

4.4.2 Functional Replacement Amid Reconstruction

Fundamentally, the issue of business homogeneity in the Xiaogongyuan area stems from a combination of multiple factors: on the one hand, the short-term profit orientation driven by market mechanisms has led business operators to favor low-risk, easily replicable business models; on the other hand, the absence of public management and planning guidance has resulted in a lack of coherence and direction in business development; simultaneously, the complexity of spatial conditions and property rights structures has objectively limited the pathways for achieving functional integration and business upgrading.

During the renewal and revitalization of the Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District, the issues of a monotonous and homogeneous business structure have gradually become apparent, emerging as one of the key factors constraining the district's sustainable development. Overall, the current commercial landscape in the area is dominated by low-threshold, high-turnover tourism-oriented retail formats, lacking multi-layered and

diverse functional support, and thus struggling to create an urban space with lasting appeal.



Fig.4 -15 Current commercial landscape of Xiaogongyuan
(Source: Author's own photograph)

In terms of business structure, some historic districts have relied heavily on commercial capital during their renewal processes, yet they lack systematic research grounded in market demand and local culture. This has led to tenant recruitment strategies that exhibit a pronounced tendency toward oversimplification and short-termism.The current business structure of the Xiaogongyuan area exhibits significant homogeneity, with food and beverage establishments accounting for nearly 80% of the total—making them the dominant commercial form in the district. Meanwhile, the development of other business types, such as cultural and creative enterprises, exhibitions, community services, and specialty retail, lags behind, resulting in a relatively thin overall functional profile.In terms of specific business choices, operators tend to favor business types with low investment costs, minimal risk, and high replicability, such as fast-food restaurants, retail of Chaozhou-Shantou specialties, and tourist souvenir sales. This has resulted in a commercial landscape characterized by "low-end, small-scale, and fragmented" businesses.While this business mix—dominated by food and beverage consumption and supplemented by tourism retail—has strong short-term customer-drawing power, it lacks content innovation and experiential depth. Consequently, it tends to foster homogeneous competition and low-level, repetitive supply, making it difficult to support multi-tiered consumer demand.

Second, at the functional organization level, the current layout of business formats has, to some extent, overlooked the daily needs and usage habits of local residents, resulting in a mismatch between spatial functions and actual demands.Currently, the arcade buildings in and around the core area of Xiaogongyuan are primarily single-story commercial spaces, lacking the support of community services, cultural facilities, and mixed-use public spaces. This

results in a lack of vitality in the neighborhood during non-tourist hours. At the same time, complex property rights relationships further complicate functional integration and spatial coordination, making it difficult for the overall business mix to achieve orderly distribution and coordinated development.

In terms of spatial quality and experience, the neighborhood's public spaces lack sufficient appeal and opportunities for engagement. Constrained by the narrow scale of the arcaded streets and requirements for the preservation of historic buildings, street-side greening and landscape design face certain limitations, making it difficult to enhance spatial comfort and visual depth through conventional means. Furthermore, the limited number and monotonous types of existing public space nodes, coupled with a lack of diverse venues for activities, result in a neighborhood that lacks appeal and the ability to encourage people to linger, which further hinders the enhancement of commercial vitality.

In terms of operational and management mechanisms, the lack of a professional operations team and systematic strategies for guiding business mix is one of the key factors contributing to the problem of homogenization.

Government intervention in business mix regulation and tenant recruitment guidance has been insufficient. Business operations in the district rely heavily on the independent decisions of individual property owners or tenants, lacking unified planning and tiered management. This "spontaneous growth" development model has resulted in a business mix characterized by fragmentation, low-end offerings, and a lack of distinctive features.At the same time, as the restoration of the core area of Xiaogongyuan has been relatively recent, the overall commercial environment has not yet matured. The costs and risks associated with attracting traditional heritage brands and distinctive business formats are high, and the government has not yet established effective incentive and support mechanisms, further hindering the introduction of high-quality businesses.

4.4.3 Issues with Public Spaces

During the conservation and renewal of the Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District, while the physical space has been restored to some extent, the quality of public spaces and the user experience remain significantly lacking, making it difficult to sustain the district's growing vitality.

First, in terms of the spatial environment and landscape design, the overall presentation is monotonous and lacks depth. Greenery in street and plaza spaces is insufficient, with a lack of shade from trees and movable landscape features. Some of the original vegetation along the

arcaded streets was damaged during construction and has not been effectively replanted, resulting in a less comfortable pedestrian environment.The spatial interface is dominated by hard paving and building facades, lacking visual variation and points of interest that encourage lingering. Visitors tend to “pass through quickly,” and the neighborhood lacks sustainable spatial appeal.

In terms of public space provision and functionality, the number of spaces suitable for lingering is limited, and their quality is subpar. Although Zhongshan Memorial Pavilion Square is relatively large in scale, it suffers from insufficient greenery and poor shade coverage; the existing trees struggle to meet the needs of users in high-temperature climates, resulting in low utilization rates of the rest facilities. Additionally, there is a lack of effective connectivity between certain spaces; for example, the green spaces and plaza surrounding Nansheng Department Store are separated by walls, which undermines the overall integrity and continuity of the space.Furthermore, the radial road network structure, combined with the absence of wayfinding systems and signage, easily disorients visitors. The district’s overall recognizability is weak, making it difficult to establish clear visitor routes.

In terms of traffic organization, the improper handling of the relationship between pedestrians and vehicles further impacts spatial quality. On one hand, traffic congestion is significant during holidays, and there is a lack of effective management; on the other hand, parking facilities are insufficient in number and poorly laid out, forcing visitors to park in distant areas and walk into the core zone, thereby reducing accessibility.At specific nodes, the mixing of pedestrians and vehicles is particularly pronounced. For example, the spaces in front of Laomagong and the theater are bisected by vehicular lanes, and the lack of adequate buffer zones at entrances poses certain safety hazards. At the same time, connectivity between the eastern and western parts of the district is weak; pedestrian traffic is primarily concentrated in the core area, while peripheral spaces lack vitality, resulting in a clear imbalance in development.

Furthermore, the functions of cultural display and information dissemination in public spaces are relatively weak. Currently, the number of historical and cultural exhibition facilities within the district is limited, relying mostly on scattered signage and temporary display panels. There is a lack of systematic narrative and immersive expression, making it difficult for visitors to obtain comprehensive historical information during their visit, which weakens the district’s cultural dissemination function.Overall, the issues in the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district’s public spaces manifest as a combination of monotonous landscapes, insufficient functionality, traffic disruptions, and a lack of cultural expression. Its renewal

efforts remain confined to the level of “physical restoration,” failing to achieve a comprehensive improvement in spatial quality and user experience. There is an urgent need to transition from “spatial restoration” to “spatial revitalization” through systematic optimization.



Fig.4 -16 Schematic diagram of public space issues

(Source: Reference 10)

4.5 Micro-Renovation of the Shunchang Block in Xiaogongyuan, Shantou

The Micro-Renovation and Revitalization Project of the Shunchang Block in Xiaogongyuan is located within the Xiaogongyuan Historical and Cultural District in Jinping District, Shantou. The Shunchang Block is bordered by Shengping Road to the southeast, Waimalu Road to the south, and Guoping Road to the west.Construction for this project was largely completed in early 2026. The author has selected its design outcomes for case analysis. Subsequent renovations of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district and the Nansheng Department Store district should build upon existing achievements and further systematically deepen efforts in areas such as enhancing spatial quality, optimizing functional structures, and reconstructing urban memory.



Fig.4 -17 Design Analysis Diagram of the Shunchang District

(Source: Shantou Jinping District People’s Government website)

The project’s scope emphasizes the revitalization and adaptive reuse of key buildings. It

targets 34 structures within the block (public and institutional properties, totaling 40 locations by street address, with a total floor area of approximately 5,056.5 square meters) for renovation. Among these, two buildings (the Civic Hall and an apartment building, with a combined floor area of 1,393.2 square meters) will undergo comprehensive interior and exterior renovations as priority projects.The remaining 32 buildings will be delivered with basic finishes—whitewashed walls and basic plumbing and electrical connections. If conditions permit, two privately-owned properties with revolutionary heritage (No. 12 Dalingdong Street and Shunchang Street, and No. 7 Taiwan You Alley, with a combined floor area of 162.8 m²) will be acquired and designated as key buildings for comprehensive interior and exterior renovations.Emphasis will also be placed on creating the neighborhood's landscape character, with renovations to main streets, squares, and courtyards. The total landscape area is 5,861 m², including the planned demolition of 5 buildings (public and institutional properties, totaling 6 locations by street address) and 19 buildings (private properties, totaling 20 locations by street address, to be purchased and demolished), resulting in 947.5 m² of green space created through demolition.



Fig.4 -18 Analysis of Buildings to be Demolished

(Source: Shantou Jinping District People's Government Website)

Renovation Scope: Compulsory purchase and demolition of necessary structures to establish a planning framework comprising "Three Streets and One Axis" (Xingjie Street, Shunchang Street, Dashi Street, and the Public Vitality Axis) and "Four Courtyards and Four Squares." The cultural square in front of the Mazu Temple will be restored, while three squares (Dashi Square, Shunchang Square, and Xingjie Square) will be arranged along the Public Vitality Axis. Four internal courtyards will be created to establish engaging focal points that also facilitate pedestrian flow and gathering.The project will comprehensively enhance the architectural facades of street-facing buildings, as well as the perimeter interfaces of squares and courtyards. It will also holistically improve the landscape, lighting, signage, and urban furniture of major streets, squares, and courtyards to create a cohesive aesthetic.

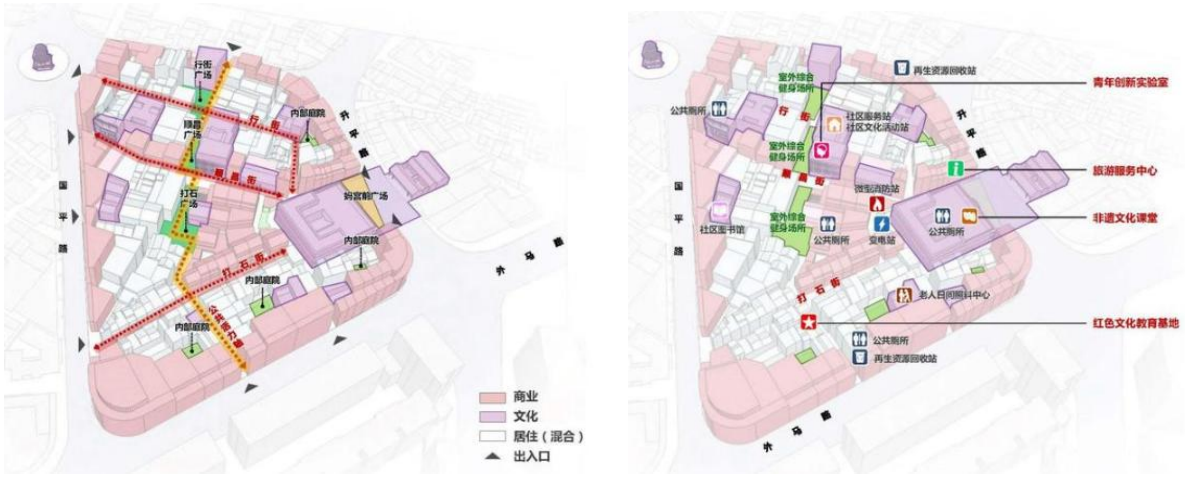


Fig.4 -19 Axonometric rendering of Shunchang District
(Source: Shantou Jinping District People's Government website)

The entire district encourages mixed-use development to foster a vibrant and diverse neighborhood atmosphere, ultimately ensuring the district retains its people, character, and charm.Arranged along the perimeter arcades, Shunchang Street, and the newly built Innovation Community, the district forms a commercial system of "one ring, one street, and one community." Centered on 12 historically significant buildings that have been prioritized for restoration and revitalization, the district features diverse cultural dissemination and experiential projects. The remaining buildings are primarily residential, with residents encouraged to spontaneously develop small-scale commercial and service businesses.

Based on the author's field research in the Xiaogongyuan area in February 2026, it was found that the neighborhood deviates somewhat from the original plan in terms of spatial implementation. The scale of the actual public spaces constructed is significantly larger than anticipated in the plan, suggesting that the scope of demolition during implementation exceeded the 24 buildings originally included in the plan. While this change has, to some extent, increased the quantity and continuity of open spaces, it has also introduced new challenges regarding spatial quality and usage efficiency.First, regarding the quality and functional configuration of public spaces, while the number of existing open spaces has increased, the overall design and facility provision remain relatively weak, lacking sufficient amenities to encourage lingering and support usage. Insufficient infrastructure—such as seating, shade, and landscape features—means these spaces remain largely limited to "passage and viewing," struggling to accommodate diverse activity needs.At the same time, many public spaces tend to be homogeneous in form and design language, lacking differentiation and distinctiveness. Supporting amenities in the surrounding areas are also largely absent, and commercial occupancy rates are low, resulting in a general lack of spatial

vitality. Aside from a few “Instagrammable spots” that attract people for photos during specific times, most spaces remain underutilized or even idle, leading to a certain degree of waste of spatial resources.Second, from the perspective of climate adaptability and spatial comfort, the current design fails to adequately address the high-temperature, high-humidity climate of the Shantou region. There is a severe shortage of shaded areas and sunshade facilities in public spaces, and the original shading benefits of the arcades have not been carried over into the newly constructed open spaces. This results in low usage rates during daytime hours, further diminishing the spaces’ public character and vitality.

In terms of spatial structure and urban memory, multiple public spaces—continuous and of similar scale—are linked in a relatively compact manner. While this enhances openness in form, it to some extent diminishes the original sense of layering and sequence in the alleyway spaces.The spatial experience of “walking—turning—stopping” inherent in traditional inner alleys has been diminished. The continuity and directionality of the street space have weakened, causing the overall space to exhibit a tendency toward “plaza-like” characteristics, which has led to a loss of the historic district’s original human scale and cultural memory.

Furthermore, regarding architectural style control, some newly constructed or renovated buildings employ bold or even starkly contrasting design approaches in terms of color and facade expression, creating a marked contrast with the surrounding traditional arcaded buildings. While this design strategy helps enhance visual distinctiveness and convey a sense of modernity, it may also undermine the overall harmony and continuity of the historic district’s character.How to strike a balance between “emphasizing design expression” and “preserving the overall character” remains a subject for further discussion.

Overall, the renovations currently implemented have played a positive role in increasing the quantity of open spaces and initially revitalizing the neighborhood. However, significant shortcomings remain in terms of spatial quality, functional support, climate adaptability, and cultural continuity. This indicates that the renewal of the Xiaogongyuan area is still in a critical phase of transition from “spatial release” to “refined spatial management.” Subsequent designs urgently need to establish a more balanced development path between enhancing spatial efficiency and strengthening the expression of urban memory.



Fig.4 -20 On-site photos of the Shunchang Block design implementation

(Source: Photographs taken by the author)

4.6 Summary of This Chapter

This chapter analyzes the spatial status and renewal practices of the Shantou Xiaogongyuan Historic and Cultural District. Building upon an examination of the district's boundaries and planning framework, it provides a systematic assessment of the current state of the district in terms of land use layout, traffic organization, green space systems, and public spaces.Overall, the current plan has achieved some success in preserving the historical fabric and establishing a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly system. However, significant shortcomings remain in the quality of public spaces, the integration of green space systems, and spatial distinctiveness, which hinder the enhancement of the district's overall vitality.

In terms of functions and business mix, the renewal process has been heavily influenced by market forces. The business structure exhibits characteristics of homogenization and uniformity, with low-threshold food and beverage businesses dominating, while cultural and community functions remain relatively weak. At the same time, complex property rights and the absence of operational mechanisms make it difficult to effectively coordinate spatial and functional planning.From the perspective of development mechanisms, the Xiaogongyuan area has undergone a transition from a market-led development model to one led by the government and involving multi-stakeholder collaboration. Renewal objectives have gradually shifted from an economic return orientation to one that balances cultural value and

public interest. However, as evidenced by the Shunchang Street case, current renovations remain primarily at the level of "spatial provision," with room for improvement in spatial quality, user experience, and the preservation of urban memory.

In summary, the renewal of the Xiaoguan Historical District has entered a critical phase of transition from "form restoration" to "quality enhancement." How to achieve coordinated development among spatial optimization, functional restructuring, and cultural expression will become the focus of subsequent design and strategic research.

Chapter 5 Nansheng Department Store District Design

5.1 Basic Information on the Design Site

The Nansheng Department Store District is bounded by Zhongshan Pavilion Square, Shengping Road, Yongping Road, and Anping Road. The district covers an area of approximately 28,000 square meters. The internal streets and alleys form a nearly orthogonal grid oriented perpendicular to the main thoroughfares, with east-west streets serving as primary thoroughfares and north-south streets as secondary thoroughfares, essentially reflecting a radial pattern extending outward from Zhongshan Pavilion Square.The northeastern side of the street system connects to urban green spaces, while the remaining three sides directly link to the arcaded streets along the main thoroughfares, ensuring strong accessibility.



Fig.5 -1 Axonometric view of the current state of the Nansheng Department Store block

(Source: Author's own drawing)

The perimeter of the district is bounded by the Nansheng Department Store building, Shengping Road, Yongping Road, and Anping Road. Among these, Anping Road is a colonnaded street, while the other main thoroughfares feature non-colonnaded buildings. The district contains numerous alleys, with the primary east-west alleys including Yong'an Street (length 153 m, width 3.5 m, height-to-width ratio approximately 3.5:1),Yonghe Street (length 193 m, width 4.2 m, height-to-width ratio approx. 3:1), Yongtai Street (length 188 m, width 4.2 m, height-to-width ratio approx. 3:1),Yongxing Street (length 165 m, width 3.5 m, height-to-width ratio approximately 2.5:1), which runs from Yongping Road all the way to the

Nansheng Department Store green space.The north-south branch alleys range in length from 30m to 100m and in width from 2.4m to 3.3m. The buildings on both sides of the alleys are two to four stories tall, with a height-to-width ratio of approximately 2.5:1 to 3.8:1. The internal alleys primarily function as linear traffic spaces, and the buildings along the streets feature front yards of varying sizes, which have the potential to be transformed into public gathering spaces.The eastern part of the block adjoins the Nansheng Department Store green space, which could serve as an expanded node at the end of the street; however, it is currently partially blocked by newly constructed arcades, preventing effective interaction with the green space.



Fig.5 -2 On-site photograph of the Nansheng Department Store block
(Source: Photographed by the author)

The overall appearance of the newly constructed arcades on the southeast side of the site is relatively mediocre, with certain discrepancies from traditional arcades in terms of architectural character and detailing. Their facades feature a bright yellow color that clashes with the surrounding historic buildings' predominantly gray-white and warm-toned color palette, thereby undermining the continuity of the neighborhood's architectural character.Additionally, the construction details are relatively crude, lacking the intricate layering and craftsmanship typical of traditional arcades, and failing to effectively reflect the local architectural language and historical characteristics. Furthermore, the new arcades are predominantly single-story structures, differing in scale and spatial layering from the multi-story, continuous facades commonly found in traditional arcades. This results in a lack of the necessary sense of enclosure and continuity along the street frontage.From an overall visual perspective, these structures resemble temporary or transitional spatial forms and are ill-suited to preserving the character of historic districts or enhancing spatial quality. This reflects the need for further improvement in character control and design refinement during the current urban renewal process.



Fig.5 -3 Current state of buildings on the east side of the Nansheng Department Store district

(Source: Photographs taken by the author + modified illustration)

Buildings within the district are primarily traditional residential structures, with generally poor overall preservation. Some buildings have been left vacant due to long-term neglect, and a few have even collapsed, creating scattered vacant green spaces; the majority have been designated as dilapidated structures, posing significant safety hazards and urgently requiring systematic repair and renewal.

Buildings along the main thoroughfare largely follow the traditional “shop-house” arcade layout, combining commercial and residential functions to create a vibrant street frontage.Several important buildings of high historical value are distributed along the street, including the former site of the Jicheng Law Firm (now a designated cultural heritage site), as well as outstanding traditional residences such as the residential buildings at 113–115 Shengping Road and the former site of Yongping Restaurant. All these buildings have been included in Shantou’s first batch of historic buildings.On the one hand, these buildings possess strong commercial potential along the street; on the other hand, many are situated at the intersections of streets and alleys or at alley entrances, which helps create distinctive entrance nodes and plays a significant role in the spatial structure of the neighborhood.

In addition, several important historical buildings are distributed within the area.For example, the residential building at No. 4 Yongtai Street on the eastern side of the block, formerly the headquarters of the Shantou Overseas Chinese Money Order Association, holds significant historical and cultural value and has also been included in Shantou’s first batch of

listed historic buildings. Adjacent to existing green spaces, this building enjoys a prime location and has the potential to be transformed through renovation into an internal public hub or cultural exhibition space, serving as a key pivot for revitalizing the internal area.

Therefore, the district's renewal should center on historic buildings as core nodes to establish a spatial revitalization system integrating "points, lines, and surfaces." By prioritizing the restoration and functional adaptation of representative historic buildings—transforming them into cultural exhibition spaces, public service facilities, or distinctive commercial venues—attractive activity nodes can be created. Simultaneously, the street and alley system should serve as connecting links to strengthen spatial connectivity and pedestrian accessibility between nodes, thereby enhancing the overall spatial continuity of the district.Building on this foundation, by integrating the utilization of idle green spaces and vacated areas, the public space network should be gradually improved, driving a shift from the renewal of individual buildings to the enhancement of the overall environment. During the renewal process, emphasis should be placed on the coordinated design of historic buildings and their surrounding environments. Through the improvement of building facades and the definition of spatial boundaries, the distinctiveness and appeal of these nodes should be enhanced, ensuring they are preserved not merely as historical relics but as vital venues for public activities and urban memory. This approach achieves an organic unity between the preservation of historical value and the revitalization of the built environment.

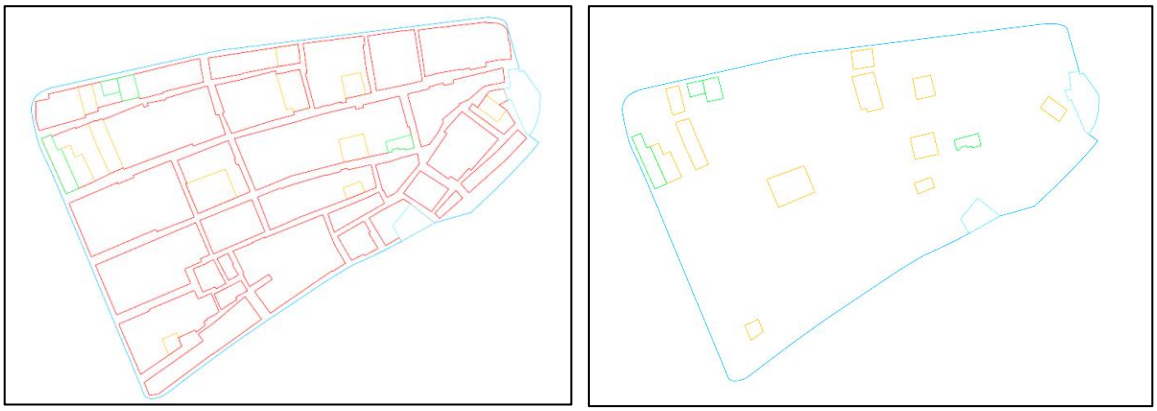


Fig.5 -4 Analysis of the Basic Conditions of the Nansheng Department Store District

(Source: Author's own illustration)



Fig.5 -5 Key Buildings in the Nansheng Department Store District

(Source: Photographed by the author)

5.2 Block Analysis

5.2.1 Analysis of Traditional Arterial Roads

The district is primarily composed of pedestrian streets with a pleasant spatial scale and a solid foundation for non-motorized travel. Due to its proximity to the main thoroughfare and the Nansheng Department Store green space, the district possesses strong potential for transportation accessibility and, in theory, could achieve efficient connectivity with surrounding public spaces. However, as things stand, this potential has not been fully realized, and traffic organization still suffers from a certain degree of congestion and fragmentation.

Specifically, the Nansheng Department Store green space on the east side is currently blocked off by construction barriers, preventing effective connectivity with the internal streets and alleys of the area. This artificially interrupts the connection between the area and the green space as well as the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion Square. This spatial disconnection not only weakens the continuity of pedestrian flow but also reduces the efficiency of interaction between the area and core public spaces, making it the most prominent limiting factor in the current traffic organization.

At the same time, some street and alley nodes within the district are subject to varying

degrees of disruption. Certain alley entrances are blocked by clutter or occupied by temporary parking, causing localized obstructions in what would otherwise be continuous pathways and affecting the connection between the district and external arterial roads. It is evident that the issues do not stem from the overall structure but are primarily manifested in the failure of local nodes and the absence of effective spatial management.

Overall, the district possesses a solid foundation for accessibility in its spatial structure; however, due to the failure to effectively connect key nodes, the current traffic system exhibits a state of "existing potential but limited efficiency." Future updates should focus on restoring the connectivity of streets and alleys, optimizing node spaces, and enhancing overall accessibility and the pedestrian experience through refined management.



Fig.5 -6 Traffic Analysis of the Nansheng Department Store District

(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.2.2 Distribution of Public Spaces

The types of public spaces within the district are relatively diverse. Aside from scattered vacant lots formed by building collapses or long-term disrepair, as well as spontaneously developed green spaces, the existing public spaces can generally be categorized into the following types.

The first type is the through-type space, which often manifests as connecting passages between internal courtyards, forming a spatial structure with a certain degree of permeability that serves to link alleys and internal spaces in specific areas; The second type is the courtyard-type space, which is mostly formed by traditional residential compounds but is generally small in scale, with limited openness and functionality;Third are perimeter-courtyard spaces, which primarily appear where buildings are arranged

back-to-back. These are narrow, elongated spaces formed by rear windows or lateral setbacks, some featuring simple greenery. While they provide some ventilation and natural light, their public character is relatively weak.

In addition, the area contains a certain number of inner-perimeter spaces, primarily referring to the elevated spaces beneath arcades or the void spaces formed by cantilevered upper structures. These spaces offer good shelter and facilitate passage, serving as important transitional interfaces connecting different areas.At specific nodes, one can also observe the presence of forecourt spaces—small-scale open areas formed by setbacks or corner treatments in front of building entrances. Examples include the nodes in front of small religious buildings and the street corner spaces created by the continuous setbacks on the west side of Yong'an Street. To a certain extent, these spaces serve functions of lingering and social interaction.Several small green spaces are also distributed throughout the district, mostly created through the reuse of demolished or idle spaces. While they provide some visual greenery, they generally lack systematic organization and functional integration.

Overall, while the district's public spaces are diverse in type, they generally suffer from being too small in scale, scattered in distribution, and functionally limited. A public space system with clear hierarchies and strong interconnections has yet to be established, leaving significant room for integration and improvement.



Fig.5 -7 Classification of Public Spaces in the Nansheng Department Store District
(Source: Author's own illustration)

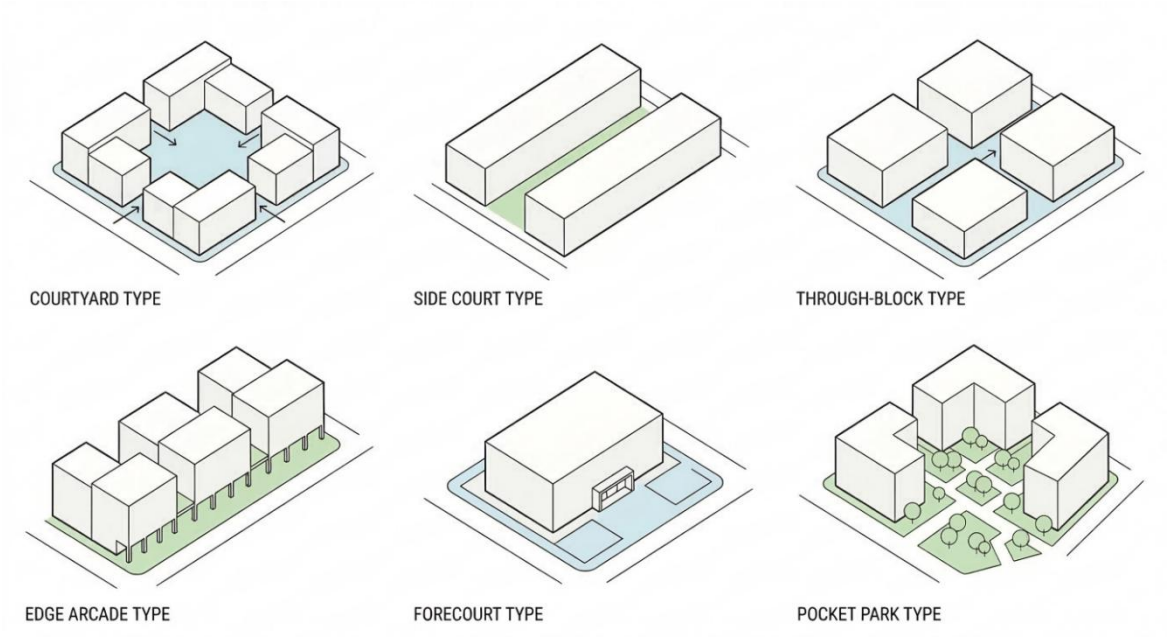


Fig.5 -8 Public Space Prototypes
(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.2.3 Spatial Integration Analysis

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the district's transportation system and the distribution of public spaces, a holistic interpretation of the spatial structure can be further developed. Currently, a basic circulation network centered on arcaded streets has formed within the district. Physical roads constitute the primary spatial framework, and the site is preliminarily divided and connected through a structure that overlays radial and grid patterns.However, this system still exhibits a certain degree of fragmentation and imbalance in actual operation: on the one hand, while public spaces are distributed in a scattered manner within the site, they are largely attached to local nodes and lack effective interconnections, failing to form a continuous spatial system; on the other hand, although some potential circulation routes have not been fully constructed, they already vaguely reveal extendable connection directions within the spatial structure.

As illustrated in the analysis, existing physical roads constitute the primary network of accessible pathways, while the auxiliary grid indicated by dashed lines reveals, to some extent, potential directions of spatial penetration within the district. Notably, several dashed lines traverse or connect existing public space nodes, indicating that these areas possess the potential for further integration and connectivity within the spatial structure. This superimposition of the "existing framework" and "potential connection paths" provides a basis for subsequent spatial optimization.From a holistic structural perspective, the district's spatial configuration can be understood as a composite "point-line-network" system: public

space nodes serve as “points,” existing streets as “lines,” and potential grid pathways as the foundation for forming “surfaces.” The core issue lies not in a lack of spatial resources, but in the absence of effective integration among various spatial elements, resulting in relatively isolated public spaces that struggle to generate synergistic effects.

Therefore, subsequent design should, while respecting the existing street and alley fabric, strengthen horizontal and vertical connections between public spaces, prioritize key nodes within the site, and construct a more continuous pedestrian network system. By integrating dispersed public spaces into a hierarchical and sequential spatial system, a transition from “point distribution” to “networked organization” can be achieved, thereby enhancing overall spatial accessibility and usage efficiency, and providing structural support for the sustained revitalization of the neighborhood.

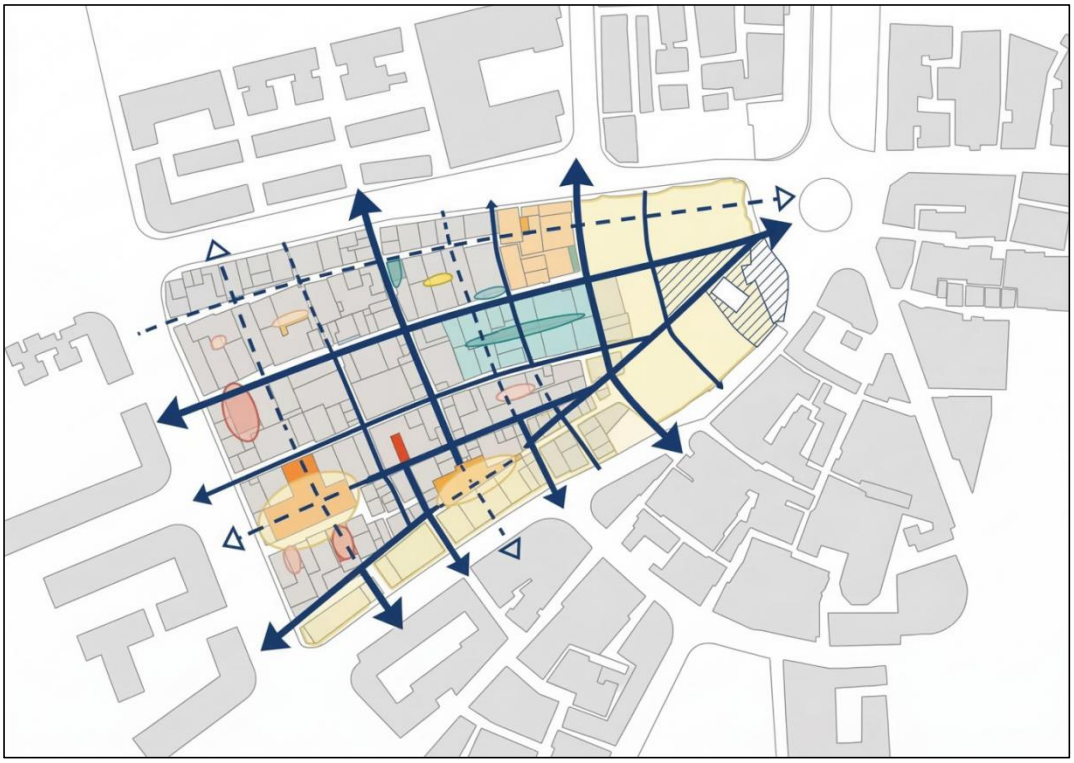


Fig.5 -9 Integrated Analysis Map of the Nansheng Department Store Block

(Source: Author’s own illustration)

5.2.4 Supplementary Analysis of Missing Textures

There is currently a vacant lot on the eastern side of the Nansheng Department Store Block. Based on satellite imagery and historical photographic records, the spatial texture of this area prior to demolition was analyzed and reconstructed through simulation.It should be noted that this work is not intended to fully reconstruct the original block form or restore it historically, but rather to provide a reference and logical foundation for subsequent design

through a re-examination of the existing spatial structure, street scale, and organizational relationships. By analyzing the historical texture, the original street system and spatial sequence of the area can be more clearly identified, thereby providing guidance for the new intervention in terms of scale control, interface treatment, and spatial organization.This design approach, grounded in an “understanding of historical structure,” facilitates structural continuity and harmony between new developments and the traditional neighborhood without resorting to simple replication. It helps avoid issues such as spatial fragmentation or scale imbalance that would result from a complete departure from the original fabric.



Fig.5 -10 Satellite Figs of the Nansheng Department Store District in 1995 and 2015
(Source: Google Maps)



Fig.5 -11 Nansheng Department Store Block Restoration Area
(Source: Author’s own drawing)

5.2.5 Demolition of Dilapidated Buildings and Resettlement of Original Residents

During the district renewal process, the demolition of dilapidated buildings inevitably raises issues regarding the resettlement and protection of the rights of original residents.

Therefore, it is necessary to systematically review and classify existing residential buildings prior to the renewal design to provide a basis for subsequent spatial restructuring and resettlement strategies. While safeguarding the basic housing rights of original residents, the goal is to achieve the coordinated advancement of renewal and social equity through reasonable spatial reallocation and adjustments to housing models.

Based on surveys and statistics of existing residential buildings within the site, they can be broadly categorized into two size scales: small-scale residences of 25–50 m² and medium-to-large-scale residences of 90–150 m². The latter category constitutes the majority, reflecting a distinct disparity in the scale of residential spaces within the district. This disparity offers diverse possibilities for adjustment in subsequent renewal efforts.



Fig.5 -12 Schematic Diagram of Floor Area Classification in the Nansheng Department Store District
(Source: Author's own illustration)

In terms of specific strategies, larger residential units can be optimized and consolidated based on their existing scale to prioritize the resettlement needs of original residents. For smaller, detached, and underutilized residential units, spatial integration and functional reorganization can be employed to introduce a "multi-story living" model. This approach increases spatial efficiency through vertical stacking within limited land constraints, thereby replacing the inefficient single-story detached housing form.This approach not only increases housing capacity without significantly increasing land pressure but also helps free up more land resources for public spaces.

By classifying and making targeted adjustments to the scale of residential buildings, it is possible to ensure the basic housing rights of existing residents while optimizing the allocation of spatial resources, thereby providing dual support—both social and spatial—for subsequent urban renewal design.Under this approach, we can draw on the "Land Readjustment" model commonly used in Japan's urban renewal efforts to systematically

integrate and reorganize underutilized spaces within the district. As shown in the Fig, this model typically centers on “land reorganization and functional reconfiguration.” By consolidating scattered, underutilized plots, it guides the transformation of space from a disorderly distribution toward intensification and functional integration.

Currently, central districts often exhibit a patchwork of vacant lots, idle commercial spaces, and underutilized land, resulting in a fragmented spatial structure, a lack of public service facilities, and overall low vitality. Through the intervention of land readjustment, the first step involves the coordinated reorganization of dispersed land parcels to consolidate fragmented plots. Building on this foundation, functions such as public housing, commercial facilities, and cultural and welfare facilities are introduced, while basic infrastructure—including transportation and parking—is improved.This process emphasizes achieving an overall improvement in land-use efficiency through a “swap—integration—redistribution” approach, without completely altering the existing property rights structure.

Upon completion of the redevelopment, the neighborhood’s spatial layout shifts from a previously loose distribution to a compact, street-facing arrangement. Commercial and public service functions are concentrated and strengthened, street facades become more continuous and cohesive, and the enhancement of supporting facilities further improves spatial quality and usability, thereby achieving a comprehensive revitalization of the neighborhood.

For the study site, the implications of this model lie in the integration of currently scattered plots and underutilized spaces. By safeguarding the rights of original residents, it guides the rational reorganization of residential, commercial, and public service functions, thereby constructing a more orderly, intensive, and sustainably vibrant spatial structure. This approach provides a crucial reference framework for the integration of public spaces[54] and land reallocation in subsequent design phases.

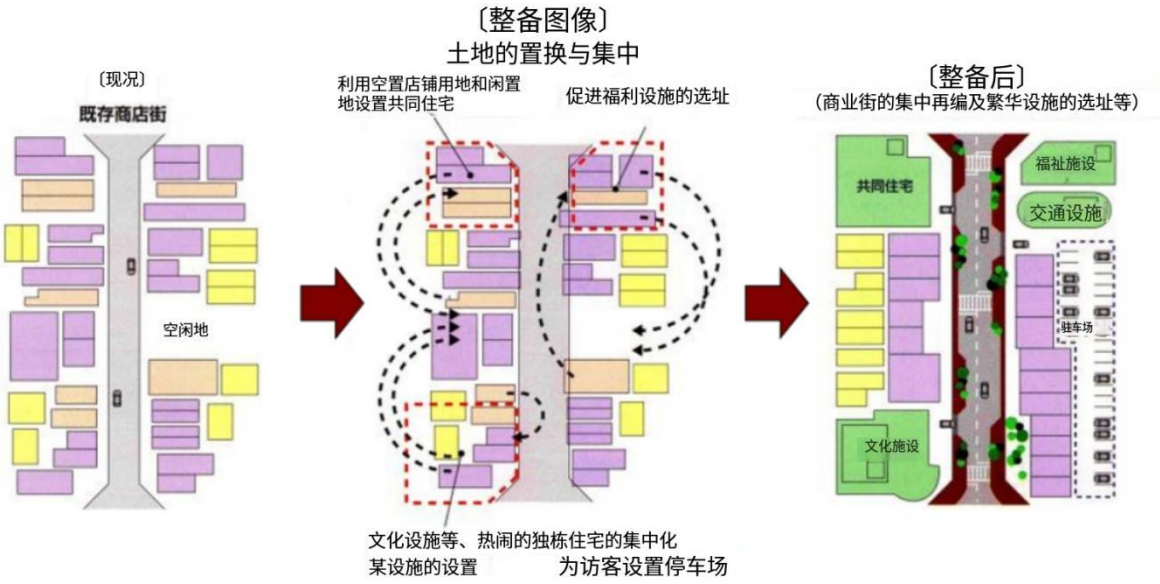


Fig.5 -13 Schematic of the Land Consolidation Plan
(Source: Reference 55)

5.3 Design Strategies

5.3.1 Design Guidelines Based on the Theory of Prudent Urban Renewal

Building upon the principles of "preservation first, incremental renewal, holistic coordination, and multi-stakeholder collaboration" established in the *Protection Plan for the Zhongshan Memorial Pavilion Historic and Cultural District in the Shantou Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area, Guangdong Province (2021–2035)*, and integrating the theory of "prudent urban renewal," this study proposes urban renewal guidelines for the Shantou Xiaogongyuan treaty port district.These guidelines go beyond traditional physical spatial controls to integrate spatial form, social structure, and governance mechanisms into a comprehensive renewal system centered on "continuity of memory" and guided by a "process of consultation." Specifically, they encompass the following aspects:

(1) Guidelines for Holistic Preservation and Pattern Continuity. Renewal must be premised on the holistic preservation of the historical spatial pattern, strictly maintaining the "sea-facing, radial" block structure, preserving the scale, orientation, and spatial sequence of traditional streets and alleys, and reinforcing the spatial leadership role of the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion as the central landmark.During the renewal process, structural reconfiguration of the existing urban fabric should be avoided. Interventions should prioritize localized restoration and node optimization, embedding renewal activities within the existing spatial system to achieve "renewal through continuity."

(2) Guidelines for Incremental Renewal and Minimal Intervention. Adhering to the "low-intervention" principle of prudent urban renewal, an incremental renewal approach of

“repair—improvement—patching” should be adopted to avoid large-scale demolition and reconstruction as well as comprehensive development.Implement categorized intervention strategies for different building types: focus on restoration and preservation for cultural relics and historic buildings; prioritize improvement and adaptive reuse for buildings with traditional character; and achieve visual harmony for general buildings through renovation or renewal. Renewal should be advanced in phases and be flexible to adapt to complex and changing urban and social conditions.

(3) Guidelines for Public Space Reconstruction and Pedestrian-Oriented Design. Using the pedestrian system as the core framework, reconstruct the neighborhood’s public space system, transforming traditional streets from single-purpose transportation corridors into multifunctional public activity spaces.By strengthening key nodes such as the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion Square, revitalizing inner courtyard spaces, and incorporating pocket parks, a multi-tiered, networked structure of open spaces will be established. At the same time, motor vehicle traffic should be restricted and the pedestrian environment optimized, making public spaces a vital conduit connecting history, daily life, and tourism activities. This process is not merely about spatial optimization but also about recreating historical scenes of daily life, thereby providing a tangible foundation for the continuity of urban memory.



Fig. 5 -14 Historic Cultural Heritage Conservation and Utilization Plan

(Source: Historic Cultural District Plan of Zhongshan Memorial Pavilion, Shantou Municipal Housing and Urban-Rural Planning Bureau, 2021–2035)

(4) Guidelines for Functional Integration and Cultural Revitalization. At the functional and business sector levels, the integrated development of spatial functions should be promoted while preserving historical and cultural values. The introduction of diverse functions—such as cultural exhibitions, cultural and creative industries, folk activities, and community services—should be encouraged to achieve the organic integration of residential, commercial, and cultural elements.Business model renewal should be guided by urban memory, prioritizing the continuation or recreation of locally distinctive lifestyles and cultural practices. This approach prevents historic districts from being dominated by a singular logic of tourism consumption, thereby preserving their authenticity and sustainability as "places of life."

(5) Guidelines for Social Equity and Resident Protection. Urban renewal should prioritize safeguarding the rights and interests of original residents, avoiding population displacement and the disruption of social structures caused by renewal. During the renewal process, reasonable spatial allocation and housing resettlement mechanisms (such as tiered housing and area-based grading) should be implemented to ensure residents' basic living conditions while improving the quality of their living environment. Through rent control and policy guidance, it should be ensured that the benefits of renewal reach the original community groups, thereby achieving development goals oriented toward social equity.

(6) Guidelines for Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration and Consensus-Based Governance. Emphasis is placed on establishing a consensus-based renewal system featuring collaboration among multiple stakeholders—government, market, and the public. The government sets the baseline for renewal through planning and institutional frameworks, including mandatory requirements such as building height controls, the continuity of arcade facades, and the coordination of materials and colors, to safeguard historical character and the public interest;Market entities participate in spatial development and operations under policy guidance, providing economic momentum; residents and users engage in the entire renewal process through participatory design, consultation meetings, and feedback mechanisms, playing an active role in spatial use, benefit distribution, and functional selection. In this process, urban memory can serve as the foundation for a shared value consensus among different stakeholders, shifting negotiations from mere interest-based bargaining toward a shared recognition of history and culture.

(7) Process-Oriented and Dynamic Implementation Guidelines. Emphasize the process-oriented nature of urban renewal, viewing it as a continuously evolving dynamic

system rather than a one-time construction project. By establishing a cyclical mechanism of "research—consultation—design—implementation—feedback," renewal plans can be continuously refined and optimized through practice. At the same time, risks can be mitigated and the sustainability and adaptability of renewal enhanced through a phased approach that begins with pilot projects.

(8) Guidelines for the Balance Between Rigid Controls and Flexible Negotiation. In the renewal of historic and cultural districts, a dynamic equilibrium must be established between government-led rigid controls and the usage demands of design practitioners and the public. Based on the character control requirements outlined in the plan, for spatial elements that carry core urban memories—such as arcade facades, street and alley scales, and historic visual corridors—the government employs institutional measures to establish a "minimum framework" for renewal. This ensures the preservation of continuity, the control of building height limits (e.g., heights in core areas not exceeding those of existing character buildings),the coordination of facade materials and colors, and the strict protection of street scale and spatial interfaces. Through institutionalized measures, the government constructs a "bottom-line framework" for renewal to ensure that the overall continuity of the historical character and the quality of public space are not compromised. Such controls are explicitly binding and serve as a prerequisite for the protection of historic districts.However, within these rigid constraints, designers, developers, and users (especially original residents) do not passively accept the situation; rather, they actively seek pathways for the redistribution of space and interests under these limitations.For example, while the arcade facades must remain continuous and the architectural forms must harmonize with the traditional character, designs can introduce more flexible spatial solutions on the rear or non-critical facades of buildings—such as larger balconies, transitional spaces, or multi-purpose areas—to enhance living quality and usage efficiency. Under height restrictions, usable floor area can be maximized through optimized ceiling heights, mixed-use spatial configurations, or internal functional reorganization;and when public facades are subject to restrictions, by directing functional vitality toward inner courtyards or secondary spaces, thereby forming a spatial strategy of "external constraints—internal flexibility."

This relationship of "rigid control—flexible response" essentially embodies a multi-stakeholder negotiation process: the government safeguards public interests and historical values through planning and policy; designers innovate spatially within the regulatory framework; and the public and users continuously adjust spatial demands through actual use and feedback.This mechanism is intrinsically consistent with the consultative

planning and incremental renewal emphasized in Germany's "Prudent Urban Renewal" approach, wherein boundaries are established through institutional frameworks, and spatial outcomes are continuously refined and optimized through design and usage practices, thereby creating a dynamic equilibrium between preservation and development.In the renewal guidelines of this study, this dynamic should be viewed as a positive design driver rather than a constraint. By establishing clear demarcations between "interfaces that must be controlled" and "spaces that can be liberated," the guidelines direct design to enhance spatial quality and utility while adhering to overall aesthetic control. This ultimately forms an urban renewal pathway that meets both historical preservation requirements and the demands of contemporary life.

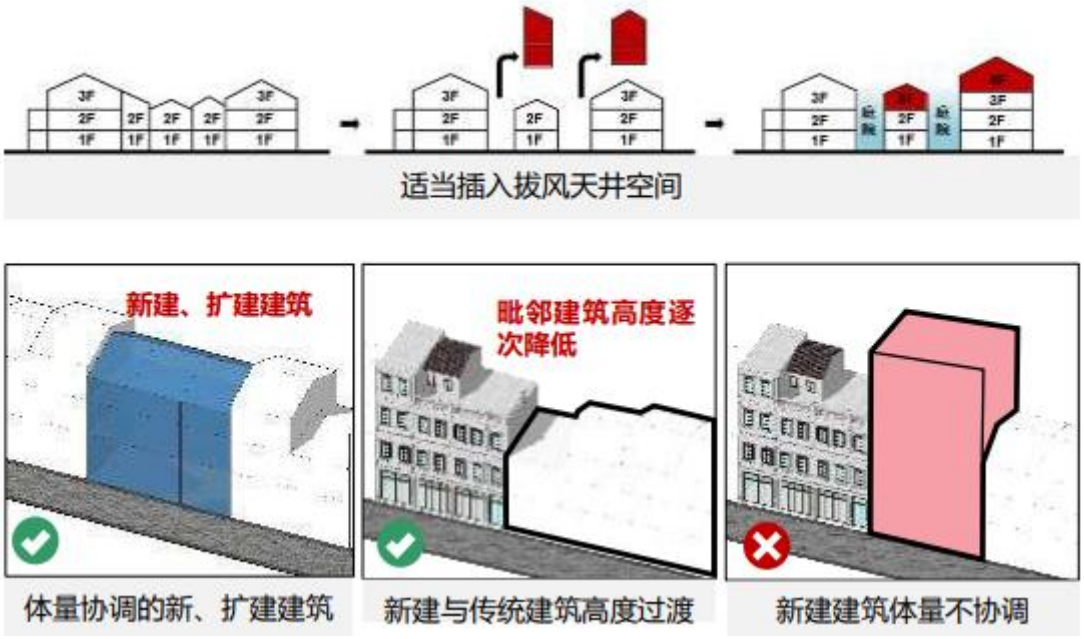


Fig.5 -15 Diagram of the Massing Layout for New Buildings

(Source:https://www.shantou.gov.cn/stswgltj/gkmlpt/content/2/2047/mpost_2047352.html#3636）

5.3.2 A Phased, Operational Renewal Model

Based on the theoretical foundations of urban memory theory and the concept of prudent urban renewal, traditional renewal models characterized by large-scale demolition and comprehensive development are no longer capable of addressing the dual demands of historical districts regarding spatial continuity and social stability.The theory of urban memory emphasizes the continuity among historical spaces, daily life, and cultural practices, while the concept of prudent urban renewal advocates for small-scale, incremental interventions to optimize space and enhance functionality while preserving the existing urban fabric and social structure.Based on this, this study introduces an operation-oriented "Operational Phased Block Regeneration" model at the design level to address the

uncertainties and risks faced by high-density historic districts during the regeneration process.

The core of this model lies in dividing the entire neighborhood into several relatively independent regeneration units (Blocks), and through a process of "pilot projects first—dynamic evaluation—gradual implementation," constructing a sustainable, iterative regeneration process.Unlike one-time comprehensive development, this strategy emphasizes phased implementation over time, allowing each block to operate independently during the regeneration process while simultaneously generating holistic synergies through spatial and functional integration. In this process, public space serves as the key medium connecting different blocks and is prioritized for the creation of a continuous spatial network, thereby preserving the urban fabric on a physical level and reinforcing urban memory on an experiential level.

At the same time, this model incorporates an "operational mindset" as a key dimension of design. Through continuous adjustments to functional integration, spatial activation, and community organization, the renewal process is transformed from a mere physical transformation of space into a dynamically evolving socio-spatial system.By gradually integrating diverse functions—such as commercial, cultural, residential, and office uses—at different stages, the neighborhood can continuously accumulate vitality and resources during the renewal process, thereby providing support for subsequent renovations. This renewal mechanism, characterized by "incremental control and dynamic feedback," not only effectively reduces development risks but also offers a new pathway for historic neighborhoods to achieve the continuity and regeneration of urban memory within a contemporary context.



Fig.5 -16 Schematic diagram of the Renewal Guidelines
(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.3.3 Specific Urban Design Renewal and Transformation

Within the framework of the renewal guidelines established based on the perspectives of prudent urban renewal and urban memory theory, the renewal of the Nansheng Department Store block no longer adopts a one-time, comprehensive renovation model. Instead, it follows a "gradual renewal" approach, advancing the implementation in phases and with targeted priorities according to the spatial conditions, problem characteristics, and development objectives of each stage.The overall renewal strategy is based on the logic of "intervening from the periphery, gradually penetrating, and systematically integrating." Under the premise of risk control and the preservation of historical fabric, it aims to achieve the gradual reconstruction of the spatial structure and public activity system.

Stage 1: Design interventions will primarily target the existing vacant lot on the eastern side of the site. Serving as the "launch unit" for the renewal, this stage prioritizes areas with lower intervention costs and minimal impact on existing spaces. By creating open public spaces (such as plazas or public activity areas), it will attract foot traffic and public activities, thereby laying the spatial and social foundation for subsequent phases of renewal.From the

perspective of urban memory, this stage is not merely a matter of filling empty space; rather, by shaping public spaces, it reactivates the daily connections between the site and the surrounding neighborhoods, transforming them into vessels for the reproduction of memory. At the same time, the implementation of this stage serves as a pilot project. By observing user feedback and changes in foot traffic, it provides a basis for adjustments in subsequent stages, embodying the strategic approach of "pilot first, then expand" characteristic of prudent urban renewal.

Stage 2: Building upon the public spaces established in Stage 1, this phase focuses on the demolition and integrated design of the dilapidated building area in the central part of the site. The core objective of this stage is to break down the existing fragmented spatial structure, connecting the central area with the eastern plaza to form a continuous sequence of public spaces and a pedestrian network.Through this process, the previously fragmented spaces are gradually integrated into a public activity network characterized by clear guidance and accessibility, thereby enhancing internal mobility and spatial legibility within the block.In terms of design strategy, the principle of "minimal intervention" through prudent renewal should be upheld. The scope of demolition must be strictly controlled, targeting only buildings with poor structural safety and no preservation value. Meanwhile, the original scale of the streets and the spatial rhythm should be maintained in the newly introduced spaces, ensuring that the new interventions engage in a dialogue with the historical fabric rather than replacing it.

Stage 3: Further reorganize and optimize the western side of the site and the remaining areas with dilapidated buildings, and construct an entrance-oriented public space on the west side to form a guiding node facing the urban interface.This entrance plaza not only serves the functions of traffic organization and pedestrian flow management but also acts as a key interface for the block's external presentation. Through spatial scale, interface design, and functional configuration, it guides pedestrians from the periphery into the interior of the block and gradually transitions them along the sequence of public spaces formed in the first two stages to the core area—the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion in the small park.The implementation of this stage marks a shift from localized interventions to holistic integration. By establishing an "entrance–transition–core" spatial structure, the spatial order and circulation paths within the block become more clearly defined.

The three phases do not exist in isolation but form a progressive relationship: Phase One begins with the activation of public spaces; Phase Two centers on spatial connections and structural integration; and Phase Three achieves the organization and guidance of the overall

space through the creation of the second main entrance and the refinement of the system.This phased approach to renewal aligns with the principles of "gradualism and adaptability" emphasized in prudent urban renewal, thereby avoiding the risks associated with one-time, large-scale transformations. It also resonates with the continuity of urban memory, allowing the neighborhood to undergo renewal gradually through ongoing use and evolution, rather than through disruptive reconstruction that replaces existing spaces.

5.4 Design Outcomes

5.4.1 Stage 1

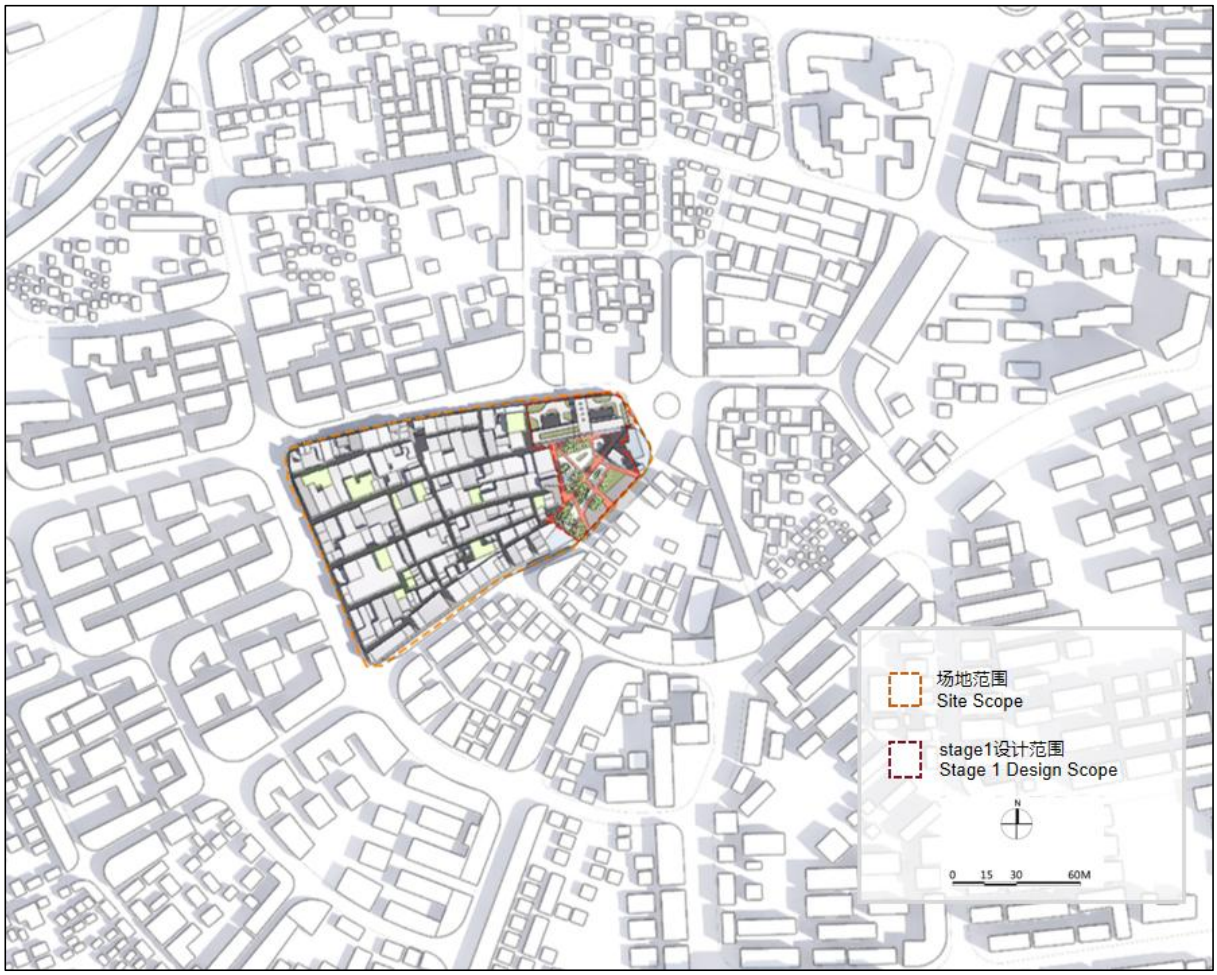


Fig.5 -17 Master Plan for Stage 1
(Source: Author's own drawing)

In the design of Stage 1, the focus is on establishing a compact commercial center with intensive characteristics to strengthen the district's economic capacity and revitalize the space.The plan proposes to provide approximately 0.92 hectares of commercial space around the site, creating a commercial hub of significant scale and appeal through a concentrated layout. Compared to the current commercial landscape in Xiaogongyuan, which is primarily characterized by scattered distribution, this strategy aims to break down the existing

“fragmented” business structure and address the lack of a core commercial anchor.Currently, the area lacks iconic brands or anchor stores. On one hand, this is constrained by the scale of the ground-floor spaces under the arcades and the limitations of the facades, which struggle to meet modern commercial operational needs; on the other hand, it reflects the immaturity of the overall commercial environment. Introducing relatively compact commercial spaces will help elevate the area’s commercial capacity, attract more influential business formats, and thereby provide sustained financial support and development momentum for subsequent dilapidated housing renovation and neighborhood renewal.

In the design, two distinct layout schemes are proposed for the spatial organization of the commercial core and the public plaza (Fig. 5-15): the first opens the plaza space toward the south, strengthening connections with the external urban space; the second extends the plaza toward the north, favoring internal spatial integration. The two schemes exhibit different characteristics in terms of spatial logic, pedestrian flow guidance, and the nature of the place.

From a spatial structural perspective, the north-facing plaza scheme places greater emphasis on the continuity of the internal street and alley fabric. By embedding the plaza within the existing block system, it helps create a relatively cohesive spatial environment and strengthens the connections with internal public spaces. However, this scheme is relatively limited in terms of external connectivity, with weak interaction with the main urban interface, making it difficult to effectively accommodate external foot traffic; consequently, the openness and accessibility of the public space are relatively insufficient.In contrast, the south-facing plaza scheme orients its spatial interface toward the city’s main direction, resulting in a more open overall structure. By leveraging the relatively active urban interface on the south side, this scheme effectively guides external foot traffic into the site and establishes a clear entrance identity. Additionally, the south-facing layout allows the plaza to connect more directly with key surrounding nodes, creating clearer spatial axes and visual guidance.

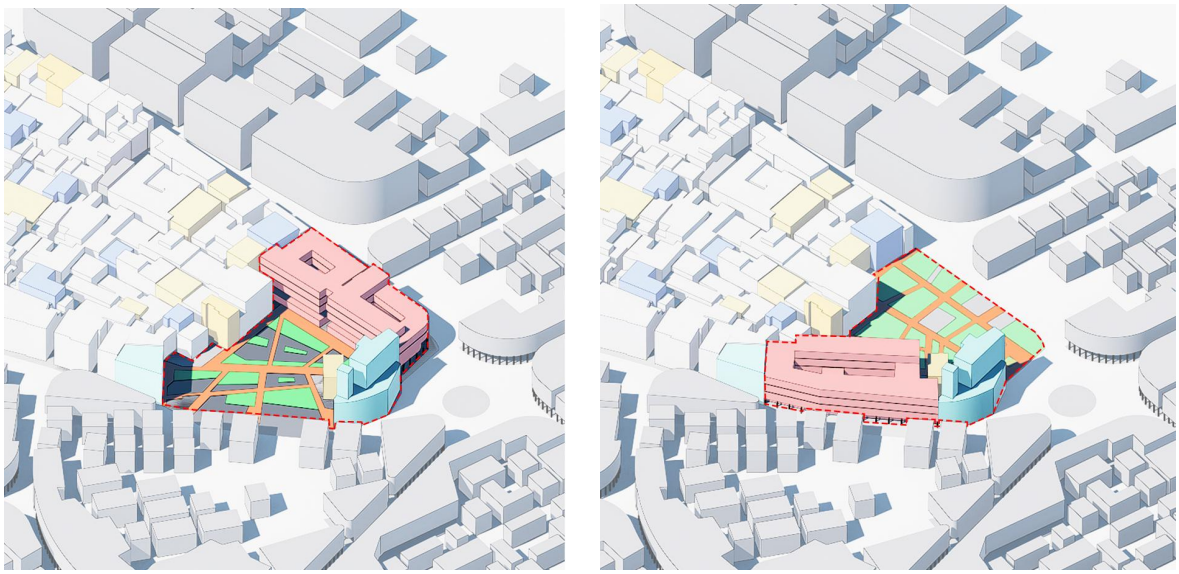


Fig.5 -18 Schematic Comparison
(Source: Author's own drawing)

Based on an analysis of the site's specific conditions, the Nansheng Department Store and the former Jicheng Law Firm building—as key historic structures in the area—form a spatial node with significant potential for integration. Positioning the plaza between these two buildings not only strengthens the spatial dialogue between the historic structures but also establishes a landmark public activity hub. In contrast, the north-facing proposal lacks sufficient integration at this critical node, and its spatial centrality is not sufficiently prominent.

In terms of usage, the southern area has a relatively concentrated flow of people and a stronger foundation for vitality. Opening the plaza toward the south helps effectively divert pedestrian traffic, alleviating pressure on the core area, while providing visitors with more spaces for lingering and resting—such as seating, shade, and open activity areas—thereby enhancing the efficiency and comfort of the public space. In contrast, the north-facing scheme, due to its weaker pedestrian flow, may face certain limitations in terms of the plaza's usage intensity and vitality.

Taking into account multiple factors—including spatial structure, integration of historical landmarks, and pedestrian flow management—the south-facing plaza scheme was ultimately selected for implementation. This scheme not only offers greater spatial openness and directional guidance but also better aligns with the actual needs of the district in terms of function and usage. It will help strengthen the agglomeration effect of the commercial center and enhance the overall quality of the public space.

Regarding public spaces, the design addresses the current issues of insufficient gathering areas and a lack of green spaces and plazas within the district by incorporating an

open public plaza adjacent to the commercial center, thereby reinforcing the public nature of the space and enhancing the user experience.Adjacent to the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion in the core area of Xiaogong Park, the site possesses significant potential for managing pedestrian flow and hosting events. Therefore, the design continues the historically formed radial and centripetal spatial structure of Xiaogong Park. By organizing the texture of the paving to reinforce axial orientation, it reestablishes the spatial connection between the site and the Sun Yat-sen Pavilion, thereby preserving urban memory in both form and experience.

Simultaneously, multi-layered courtyard spaces are introduced within the plaza. By combining enclosed and open areas, a spatially rhythmic sequence is created, enhancing the site's appeal for lingering and exploration. This "plaza-courtyard" composite structure not only helps disperse pedestrian flow and improve user comfort but also provides a relatively pleasant environment for activities under hot climatic conditions, thereby attracting visitors to linger and extending their stay.Overall, the Phase 1 design employs a dual strategy of "commercial clustering + public space shaping" to optimize the spatial experience while boosting economic vitality, laying the foundation for subsequent phased updates.



Fig.5 -19 Aerial rendering of Phase 1 renewal
(Source: Author's own illustration)



Fig.5 -20 Bird's-eye view rendering of Phase 1 upon completion
(Source: Author's own illustration)

As the core intervention project in Phase 1, this small-scale commercial center emphasizes harmonious integration with the surrounding historic district in terms of spatial organization and form control. The overall design adopts an open ground-floor layout. By opening up the internal courtyard space, the building's facade transitions from a closed to a permeable one, strengthening the connection with the surrounding streetscape and creating a continuous and attractive public activity interface.

In terms of scale control, the design references the traditional block texture of the pre-demolition neighborhood, making appropriate adjustments to the building's massing to ensure consistency with the surrounding environment in both spatial scale and form.By introducing a "dual courtyard" layout, the design ensures the continuity of commercial functions while creating internal spaces for ventilation, natural light, and activities. This approach responds to the climatic characteristics of the Lingnan region and continues the "introverted" spatial organization typical of traditional neighborhoods. Additionally, the courtyards help guide pedestrian flow into the building's interior, enhancing the space's openness and exploratory potential.

Regarding height and overall form control, the building's height is limited to 21 meters, creating a relatively harmonious skyline relationship with key surrounding structures (such as the Nansheng Department Store). This approach meets planning requirements while avoiding an oppressive presence within the historic context. Through comprehensive control of massing, facades, and spatial organization, this commercial center strengthens the area's commercial clustering effect while achieving an organic integration with the existing urban fabric and spatial order.

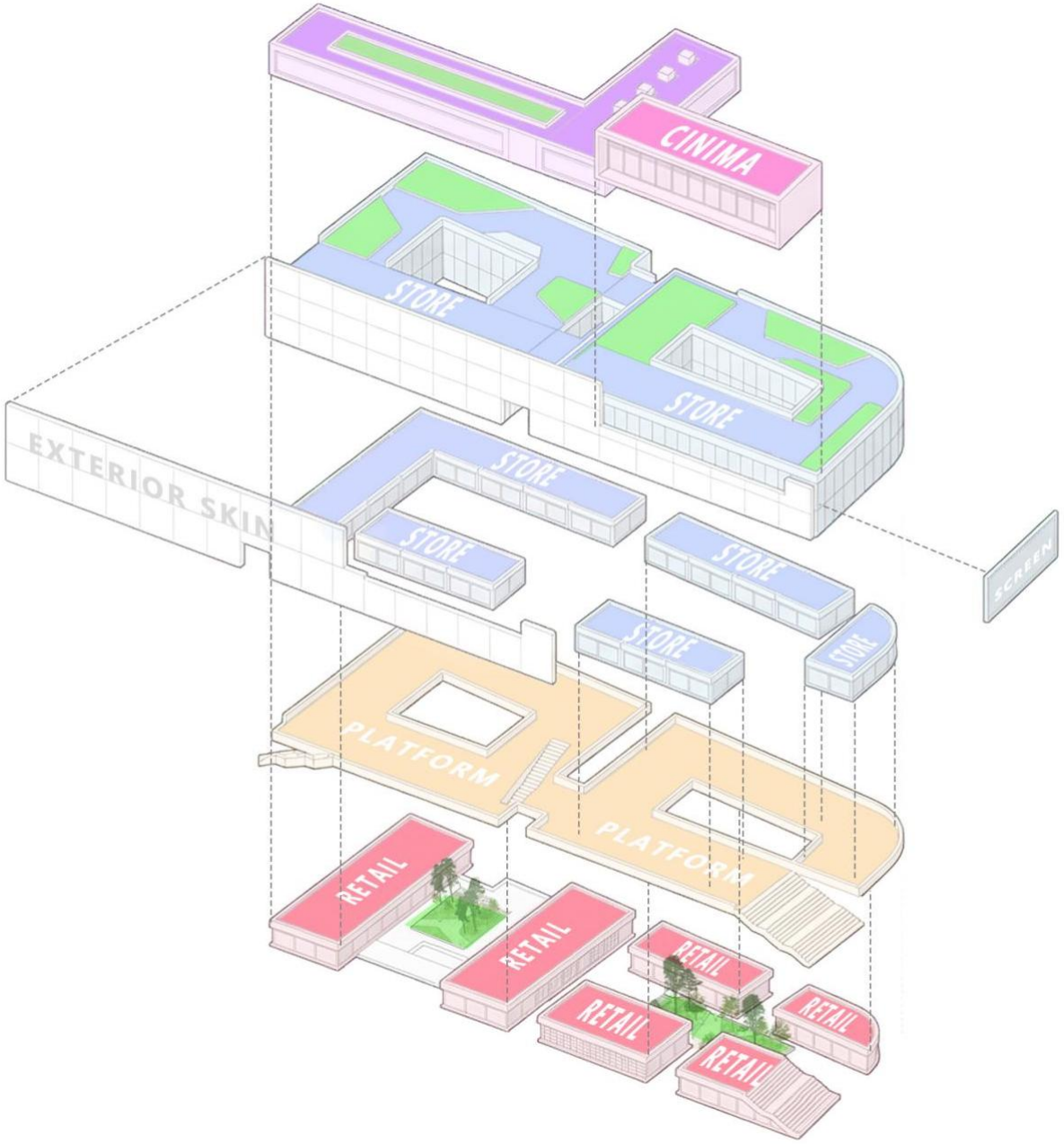


Fig.5 -21 Schematic diagram of the explosion at the business center
(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.4.2 Stage 2

In the design for Stage 2, the renewal strategy shifts from the earlier focus on activating key nodes to the systematic integration and quality enhancement of the internal spatial structure of the district.Based on the earlier analysis of public space types, traffic organization, and potential connectivity routes, the site was identified as an urban district with strong "potential for incremental reconstruction." Therefore, this stage proposes an operation-oriented "zonal incremental renewal" strategy. By dividing the entire block into several independently implementable sub-blocks and advancing the renewal in a phased

manner according to both chronological sequence and functional logic, the strategy aims to achieve simultaneous improvements in spatial optimization and neighborhood vitality.

The core of this strategy lies in transforming the traditional one-time “large-scale demolition and reconstruction” model into an incremental process of “pilot implementation—dynamic evaluation—gradual expansion.”On the one hand, the selective demolition of dilapidated and underutilized buildings releases reusable spatial resources, into which small-scale public spaces and mixed-use functions are integrated. On the other hand, each sub-block preserves the original street and alley fabric and scale relationships during the renewal process, avoiding damage to the historical spatial structure and thereby striking a balance between “continuity” and “renewal.”

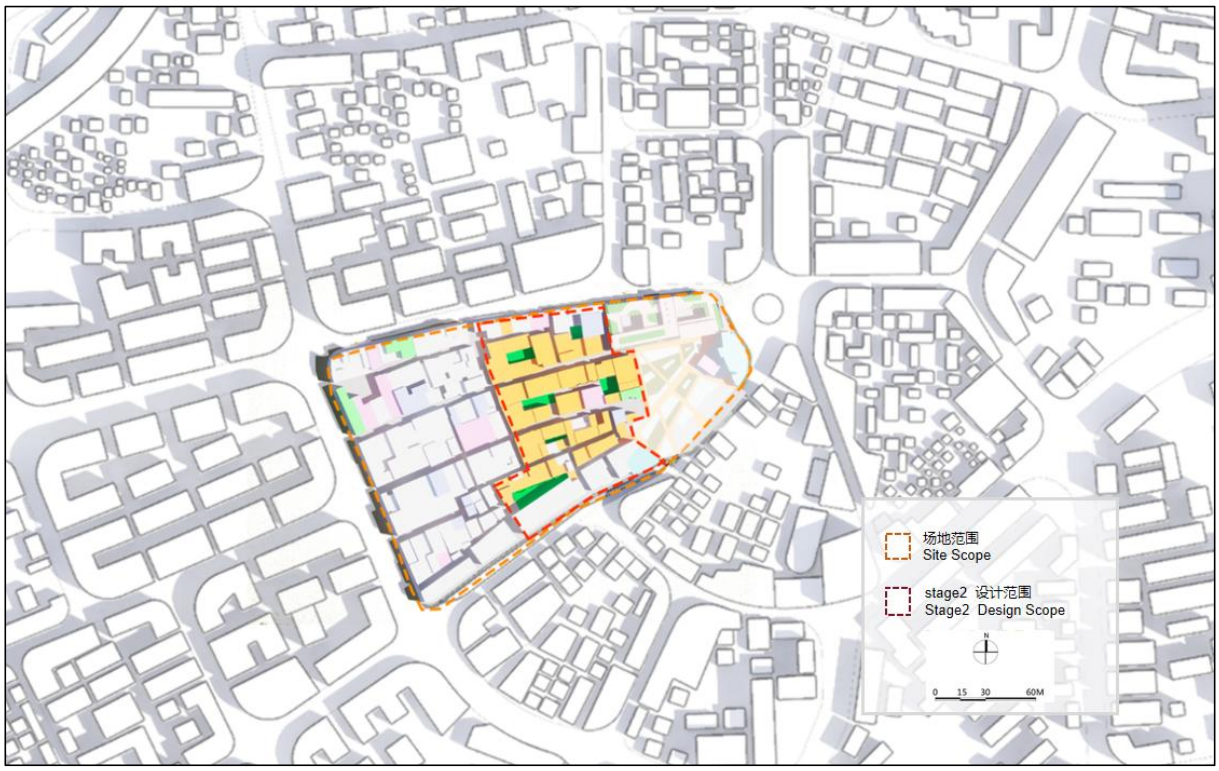


Fig.5 -22 Phase 2 Master Plan
(Source: Author’s own drawing)

On the spatial level, the design establishes a multi-tiered public space system comprising “streets—courtyards—nodes,” transforming the area from a linear transportation corridor into a mixed-use space conducive to lingering and social interaction. Functionally, the introduction of diverse elements—including cultural, commercial, residential, and office functions—creates a mixed-use neighborhood structure capable of operating around the clock.The functional positioning and implementation sequence of different blocks during the renewal process exhibit distinct differences. This differentiated strategy not only enriches the spatial experience but also ensures that the neighborhood maintains a certain level of

operational vitality and adaptability throughout the renewal process.

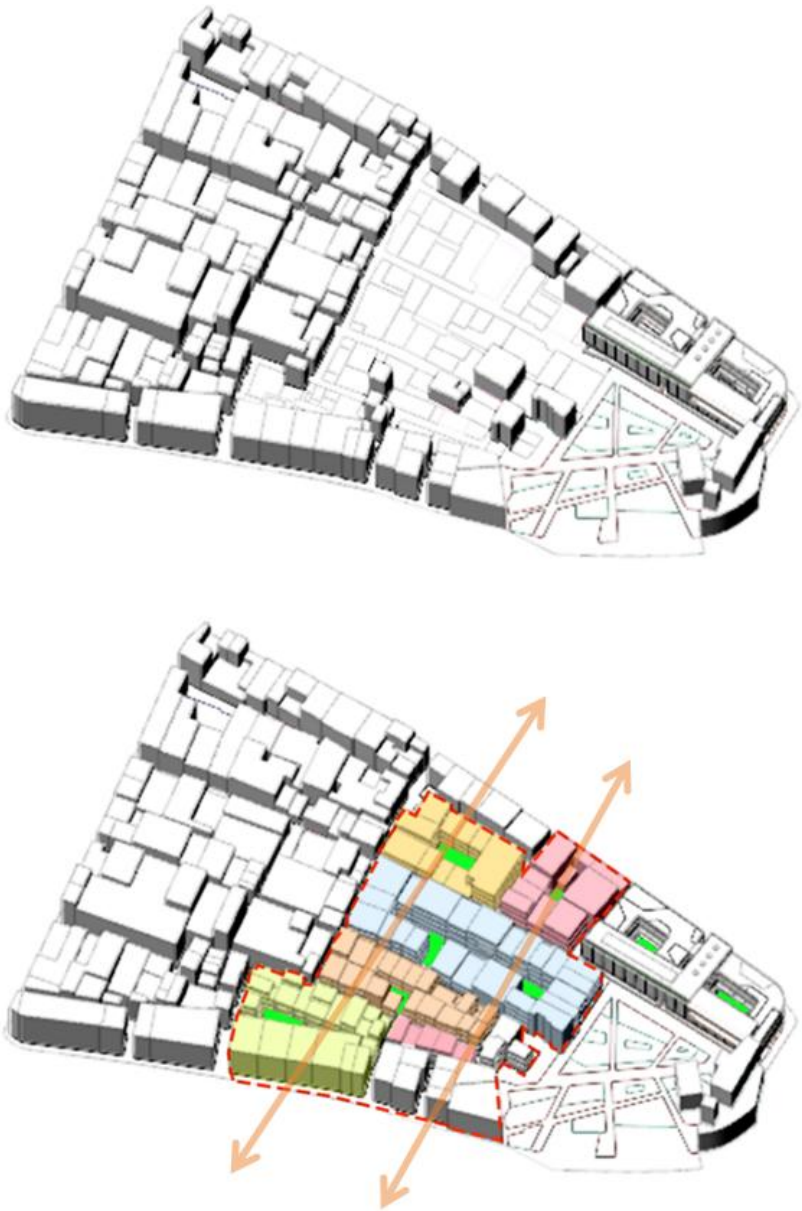


Fig.5 -23 Comparison of Phase 2 Demolition and Reconstruction
(Source: Author's own drawing)

In terms of spatial treatment, the selective demolition of certain dilapidated buildings has freed up underutilized land resources, allowing for the integration of small-scale public green spaces and courtyard areas. These spaces not only improve lighting and ventilation conditions within the original high-density environment but also provide residents and visitors with multi-level venues for activities.The original street and alley scales are maintained between blocks to preserve basic circulation interfaces and spatial proportions, thereby avoiding excessive disruption to the historical fabric. At the same time, spatial scales are moderately expanded at key nodes to create recognizable public gathering points that encourage lingering, thus establishing a spatially rhythmic sequence that alternates between

“continuous streets and alleys” and “local nodes.”

In terms of spatial experience, the design emphasizes the optimization and enrichment of the pedestrian environment. On one hand, by opening up the ground floors of select buildings, courtyard spaces interpenetrate with the street, enhancing spatial accessibility and interactivity; on the other hand, by introducing transitional spaces (such as areas under arcades, elevated platforms, and semi-outdoor transitional zones), the design responds to local climatic conditions, providing users with a comfortable environment sheltered from sun and rain while reinforcing the continuous pedestrian experience within the block.

In terms of functional organization, this phase involves the appropriate repurposing of spaces that were previously used solely for residential purposes or underutilized, thereby establishing a mixed-use system.Some detached buildings are converted into tech innovation office spaces, attracting a dynamic workforce and increasing the block’s daytime activity levels; their ground-floor open spaces can incorporate retail and community services, enhancing the vibrancy of the public interface. Meanwhile, the upper floors and some standalone units retain residential functions. By optimizing unit layouts, the design offers diverse living options—including shared activity spaces and balconies—to meet the needs of a wide range of residents.

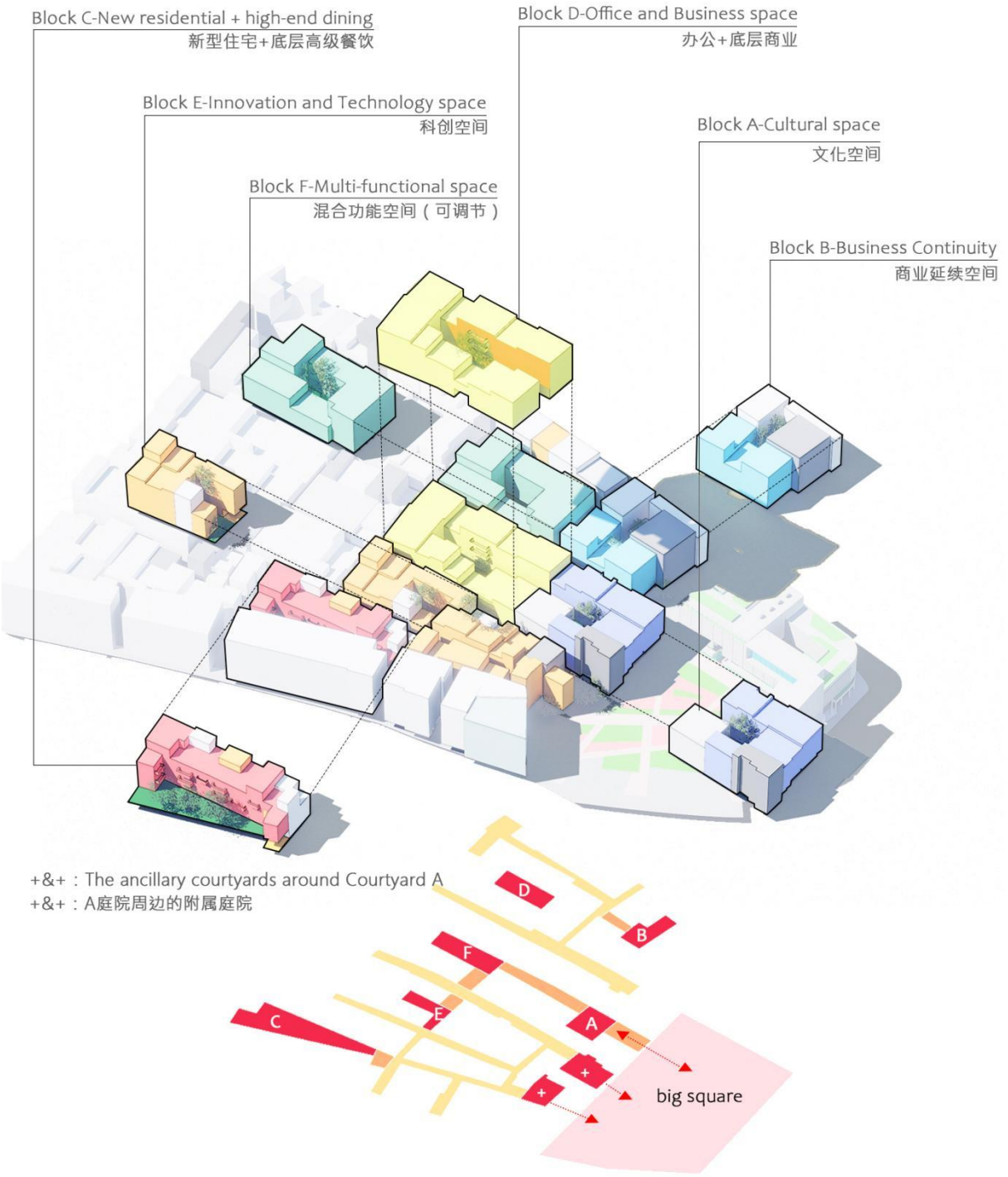


Fig.5 -24 Comparison of Phase 2 Demolition and Reconstruction

(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.4.2.1 Block A: Zone for Cultural Guidance and Enhanced Spatial Connectivity

As the core transitional zone directly connecting to the Stage 1 plaza, the design of Block A focuses on strengthening spatial connectivity and embedding cultural attributes. By incorporating multiple small-scale public nodes and open courtyard spaces within this area, it forms a continuous public space system with the previously established central plaza. Simultaneously, the introduction of cultural exhibitions, local events, and public art enhances the site's capacity for cultural expression.

This block not only serves as a "spatial connector" but also acts as a vital vehicle for reactivating the cultural memory of the neighborhood. Addressing the current issue of weak cultural identity in small parks, Block A employs coordinated spatial and functional design to create a cultural venue with distinctiveness and a strong sense of place, thereby forming a cultural spatial sequence that radiates from the central plaza into the inner neighborhood.



Fig.5 -25 Rendering of Block A, Phase 2
(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.4.2.2 Block B: Commercial Extension and Façade Revitalization Zone

Building upon the commercial core established in Stage 1, Block B plays a crucial role in extending commercial functions into the inner blocks. While maintaining the existing commercial facade, the design optimizes the ground-floor spatial layout and pedestrian circulation to create a continuous and attractive commercial flow.

Unlike traditional single-use retail spaces, this block emphasizes the creation of an "open interface." By opening up the ground-floor spaces and introducing transitional spaces, it fosters an interactive relationship between the commercial areas and the street environment,

thereby enhancing the overall vitality of the neighborhood. Additionally, as a transitional zone connecting the core commercial area with the internal living spaces, Block B facilitates the organic integration of commercial functions rather than their isolated existence.



Fig.5 -26 Rendering of Block B, Phase 2
(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.4.2.3 Block C: Residential Renewal Pilot and Mixed-Use Zone

Located at the edge of the site, Block C features a relatively intact arcade façade and ample courtyard space, making it the ideal candidate for a residential renewal pilot project. This block adopts a "vertical mixed-use" spatial model, with new residential units on the upper floors and high-quality dining and public service facilities on the lower floors, thereby achieving an organic integration of residential and commercial functions.

Regarding specific residential renewal strategies, this block optimizes existing residences through moderate spatial additions and structural interventions (such as balconies and exterior corridors), while adhering to overall aesthetic control and design guidelines (e.g., building height, facade continuity, and proportions). These interventions not only enhance the usable area and quality of life within residential spaces without compromising the overall historical character but also address, to a certain extent, the practical needs of original residents for improved living conditions.

This strategy essentially embodies a dynamic balance between "top-down" planning controls and "bottom-up" usage demands within the framework of prudent urban renewal.On the one hand, the government uses design guidelines to regulate the overall character and spatial order; on the other hand, by allowing a certain degree of flexible adjustments (such as

balcony extensions and spatial expansions), it provides residents with opportunities to participate in spatial transformations, thereby achieving a balance between institutional controls and individual needs. This mechanism of "limited growth" transforms buildings from static historical relics into living spaces capable of continuous evolution.Simultaneously, as a pilot area for residential renewal, the outcomes of this block's transformation will be evaluated and incorporated into subsequent phases, providing a replicable model for other neighborhoods and even the large-scale residential redevelopment of Stage 3. Through multifaceted explorations in spatial form, functional organization, and institutional flexibility, Block C not only undertakes the task of enhancing residential quality but also serves as a vital testing ground for connecting the continuity of historical fabric with the practical demands of contemporary life.



Fig.5 -27 Rendering of Block C in Phase 2
(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.4.2.4 Block D (& E): Industrial Introduction and Office Revitalization Zone

Block D primarily serves to optimize the area's industrial structure and acts as a key platform for introducing office and innovation spaces. Addressing the current issues in the Xiaogongyuan area—where low-end commerce dominates and industrial support is lacking—this block will provide new economic momentum by introducing office and innovative industrial spaces.

In terms of location, this block is situated within the interior of the neighborhood, where commercial visibility is relatively low but environmental stability is strong, making it more suitable for office development. The influx of office workers will not only enhance the

neighborhood’s daytime vitality but also help create a mixed-use spatial structure with multi-time-slot usage, thereby improving the area’s current pattern of “nighttime activity and daytime stagnation.”

5.4.2.5 Block F: Flexible Adjustment and Gradual Expansion Zone

As a regulatory block within the phased renewal system, Block F’s core function is to build upon the implementation outcomes of the earlier pilot renewal (Blocks A–E) and achieve dynamic optimization of space and function based on this foundation. Unlike the clearly function-oriented design strategies of other blocks, this block avoids excessive functional fixation; instead, it serves as a “reserved renewal unit” to maintain flexibility and adaptability throughout the overall renewal process.Spatially, it preserves the original street and alley fabric and scale relationships. By integrating existing elements and implementing selective demolition and reconstruction, it unlocks spatial potential and forms a continuous pedestrian system and public space network with surrounding blocks, enabling it to accommodate overflowing foot traffic and activities.

In terms of functional organization, Block F emphasizes a dynamic generation mechanism based on operational feedback. Its specific land use and spatial configurations can be adjusted according to the outcomes of earlier renewal phases—for example, accommodating commercial expansion, converting into cultural or community service spaces, or serving as supplementary venues for office and innovation spaces.From the perspective of renewal logic, this block embodies the principles of “incremental control” and “dynamic adjustment” in prudent urban renewal. By reserving flexible space, it reduces the risks of uncertainty in the overall renewal process and provides a practical platform for negotiation among the government, operators, and residents. Therefore, Block F serves not only as a transitional zone at the spatial level but also as a “regulator” within the entire renewal system, transforming the block’s renewal from a linear progression into a process of continuous feedback and iterative optimization.



Fig.5 -28 Rendering of Block D in Phase Two
(Source: Author's own illustration)



Fig.5 -29 Rendering of Block E in Phase Two
(Source: Author's own illustration)

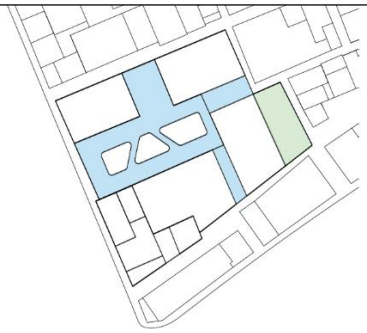
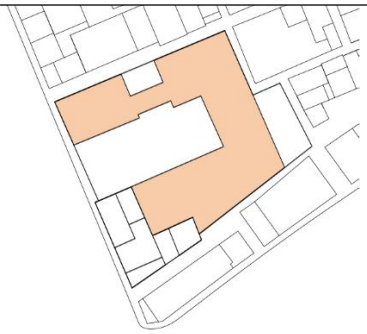
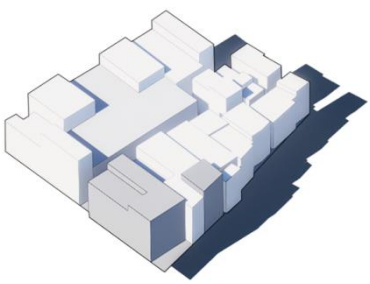
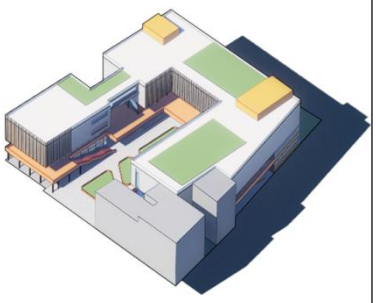
5.4.3 Stage 3

In the design for Stage 3, the focus of the renewal shifts further toward the comprehensive rehabilitation of areas with a high proportion of dilapidated housing and the restructuring of the residential system. Since dilapidated housing accounts for approximately 80% of the area in this stage, the resettlement of original residents and the improvement of

living standards become central issues alongside spatial renewal.Compared to the previous stage's strategy, which primarily focused on spatial integration, this stage emphasizes a renewal path that "combines housing security with spatial optimization." Building on this foundation, it introduces a phased, incremental operational renewal model, transforming the overall rehabilitation process into a systematic process that can be implemented in stages and dynamically adjusted.

In terms of spatial organization, the design adopts a land consolidation approach, merging the original scattered small-scale plots to form relatively complete, large-scale development units. This process is not merely a physical merger but also a reorganization of spatial relationships based on the concept of topological reorganization (see Table 5-1).

Table5 -1 Partial topological analysis of Stage 3 plaza design (self-drawn)

Topological Application	Before Renovation	After Renovation	Supplementary Notes
Planar Base			街道与公共空间 Streets and public spaces 遗留空地 Vacant lots 绿化空间 Green spaces
Data Comparison			面积测算 Area Measurement 更新前： 公共面积：0㎡ 住宅面积：6270㎡ 更新后： 公共面积：3650㎡ 住宅面积：6350㎡ Before Update: Public Area: 0㎡ Residential Area: 6270㎡ After Update: Public Area: 3650㎡ Residential Area: 6350㎡
Perspective Rendering			

By reconfiguring the connections between existing building units and restructuring the

spatial layout, multiple independent and inefficient building volumes are integrated into a continuous and efficient whole, thereby optimizing the spatial structure and enhancing land use efficiency. Addressing the issues of high staircase-to-floor-area ratio and low spatial efficiency common in traditional detached houses, the integration of multiple units frees up space previously occupied by circulation areas, transforming the spatial organization from "fragmented occupation" to "holistic organization."

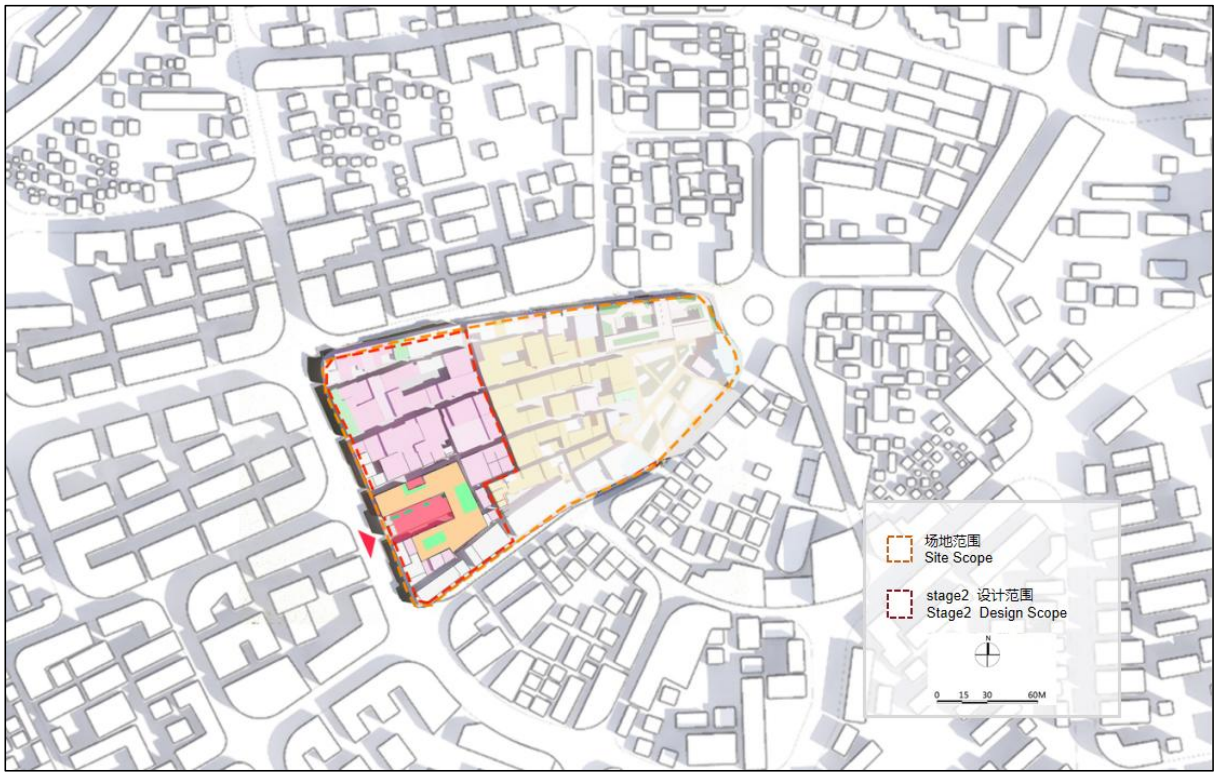


Fig.5 -30 Phase 3 Master Plan
(Source: Author's own drawing)

Building on this, original residents can be relocated to the ground floor of the consolidated building or to mixed-use spatial units. This not only improves their living conditions but also, to a certain extent, frees up more land resources for public spaces and green areas, achieving a balance between residential needs and the public interest.At the same time, in conjunction with a phased, incremental renewal strategy, this revitalization process is not completed in a single step but is implemented through pilot projects in specific zones and gradual advancement. Dynamic adjustments are made at different stages based on actual operational and residential feedback, thereby reducing renewal risks and enhancing the controllability of implementation.

Overall, this phase achieves a transition from individual building renewal to systematic reconstruction through a comprehensive strategy of "land consolidation—topological reorganization—incremental implementation."While safeguarding existing living space and

residents' rights, this approach not only optimizes spatial structure and environmental quality but also provides a structural foundation for the creation of public spaces and the sustained enhancement of neighborhood vitality. This process embodies the emphasis on gradualism, consultation, and sustainability in prudent urban renewal, while also preserving and revitalizing urban memory through the continuation and reinterpretation of existing spatial relationships.

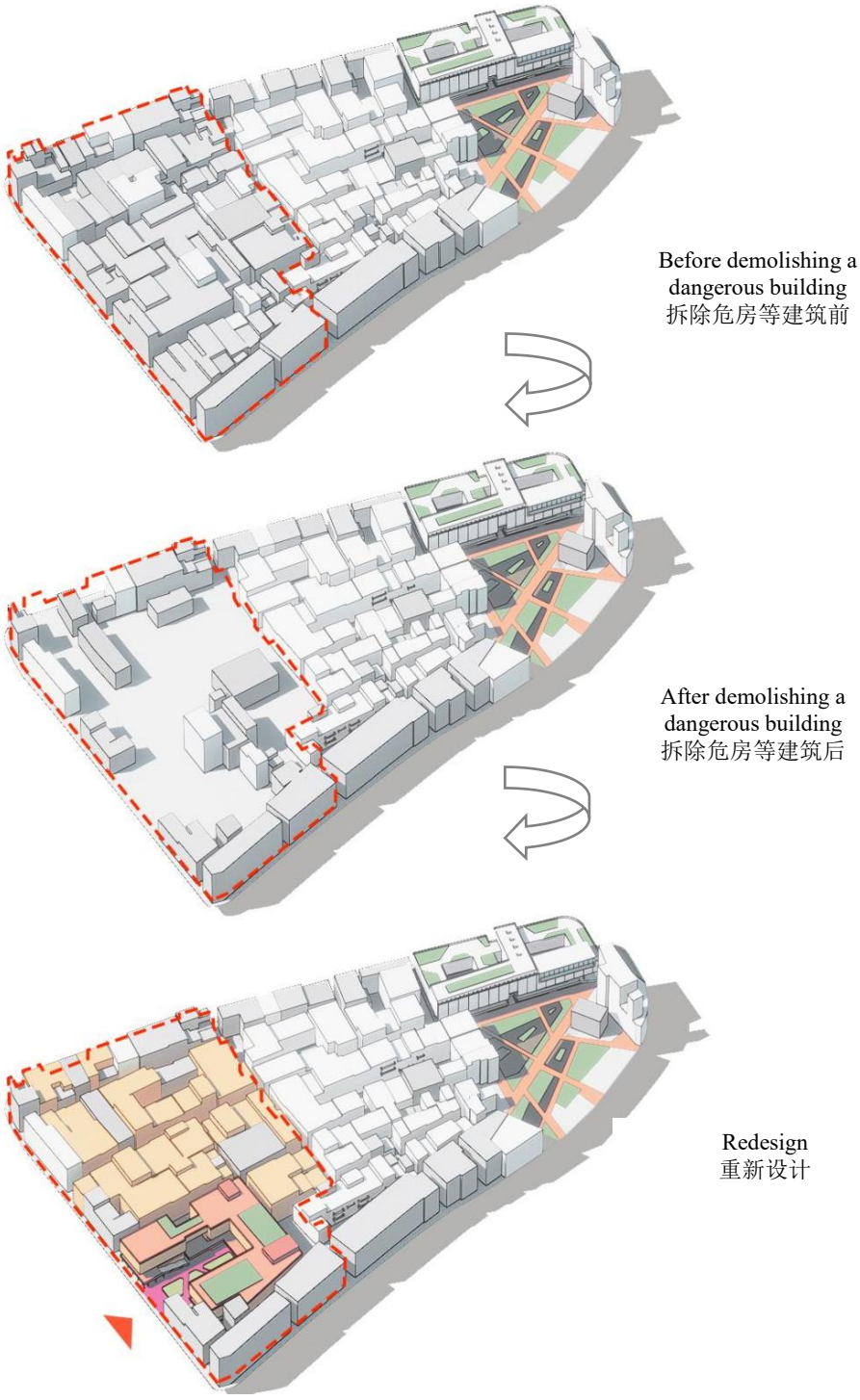


Fig.5 -31 Comparison of Phase 3 Before and After Demolition and Reconstruction

(Source: Author's own illustration)

In terms of the overall spatial structure, the design reopens and repurposes the large, abandoned warehouse site on the west side, restoring its historical spatial texture and integrating it with the existing open space on the southwest side to form a new entrance plaza. Serving as a key open node in the district, this plaza provides essential “breathing space” for the high-density residential environment, thereby improving the overall environmental quality. At the same time, by optimizing the building facades in the surrounding area, it enhances spatial enclosure and accessibility, creating conditions for the further revitalization of the inner blocks.Simultaneously, the introduction of the plaza enhances the spatial experience of the radial road network, allowing the existing urban structure to continue within the new spatial organization, thereby preserving urban memory throughout the renewal process.

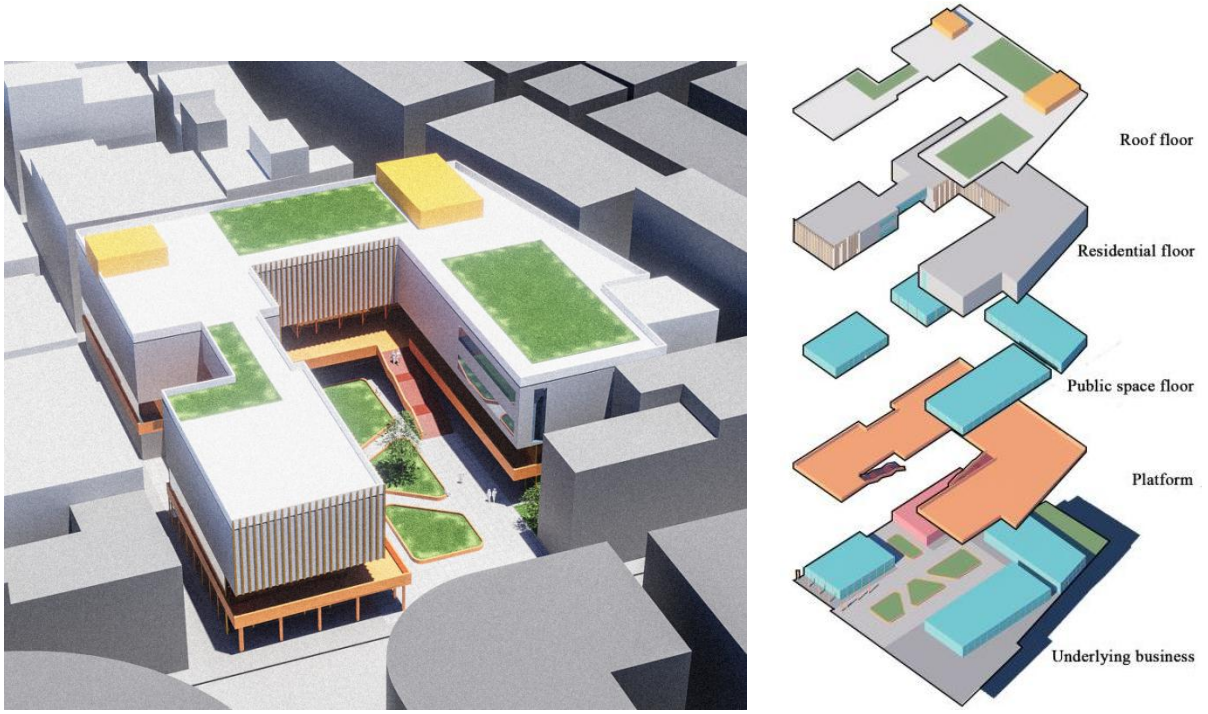


Fig5 -32 Schematic aerial view of the entrance plaza
(Source: Author’s own drawing)

Regarding the configuration of public spaces and green areas, the design moderately expands the spatial layout without disrupting the original scale of the streets and alleys. By carefully integrating green spaces and open areas, the overall environmental comfort is enhanced. At the same time, the updated building forms are more compact than in the previous phase, improving land use efficiency and meeting the demands of high-density renewal.



Fig.5 -33 Rendering of the entrance space node design

(Source: Author's own drawing)

In terms of functional configuration, this phase adopts a mixed-use model centered on residential functions while incorporating commercial and public service elements. The majority of the buildings are designated for residential use to meet the needs of both the original residents and the new population; a certain proportion of commercial functions is retained along the street frontage to maintain the vitality of the neighborhood and provide economic support; and public service facilities such as a kindergarten are introduced around the entrance plaza to address the community's support needs.It is worth noting that the establishment of this kindergarten partially restores the original public service functions (as the kindergarten near the original site had been closed due to structural safety concerns), thereby helping to rebuild the community's social fabric.

Phase Three employs a strategy of "land consolidation—residential restructuring—public space enhancement." While safeguarding the rights of existing residents, this approach optimizes the spatial structure and refines functional capabilities, facilitating the transition of the area from localized renewal to comprehensive revitalization.

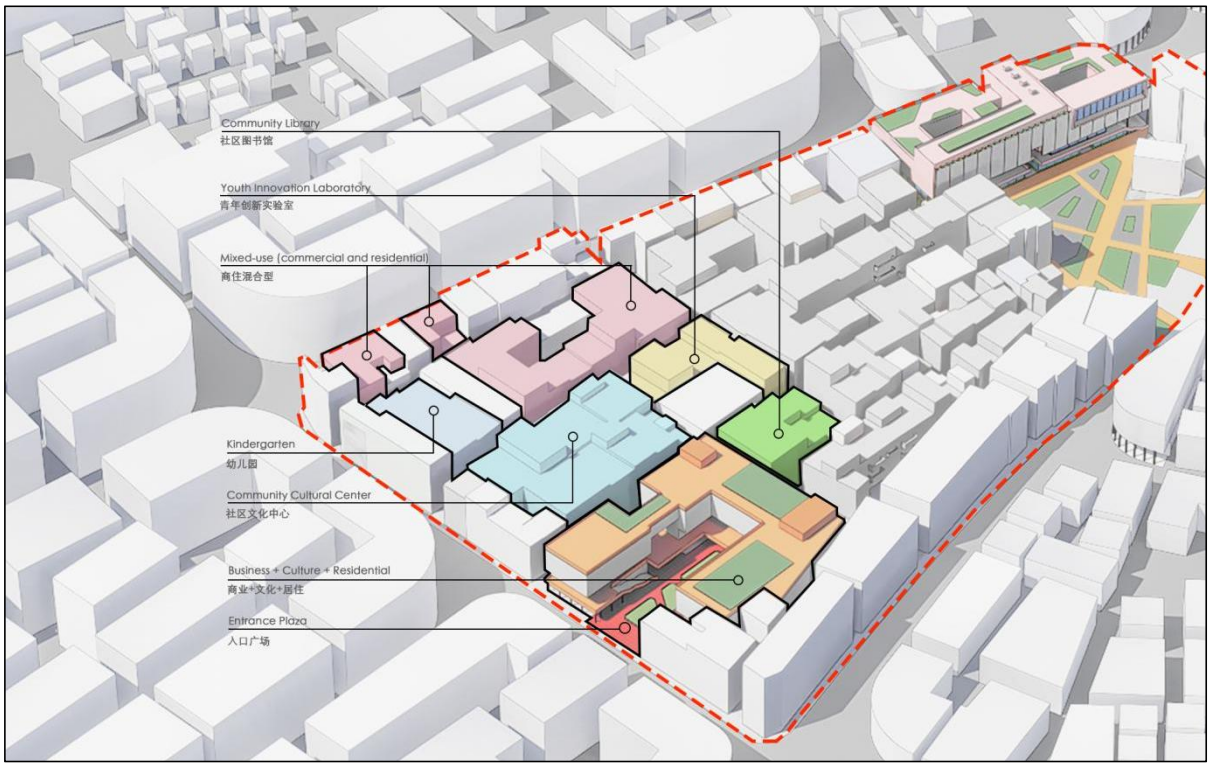


Fig.5 -34 Schematic Diagram of Functional Zoning
(Source: Author's own illustration)

5.4.4 Summary of the Three Phases

Based on the practical challenges and spatial potential of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district, this paper proposes a three-stage renewal strategy progressing from "point activation" to "holistic revitalization." It introduces a "zonal, incremental, operation-oriented renewal model" to facilitate the orderly transformation of the neighborhood across both temporal and spatial dimensions. The overall approach follows a progressive logic—from economic drivers to spatial integration and finally to residential restructuring—achieving a gradual deepening from localized interventions to systemic renewal.

Stage 1 uses the introduction of commercial activities as a starting point. By establishing compact small-scale commercial centers, it consolidates dispersed business formats to enhance the area's economic vitality and appeal. Concurrently, the creation of open plazas and courtyard spaces strengthens spatial connections with the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Pavilion, laying the groundwork for a public space system and pedestrian flow. This establishes a foundation for financial support and vitality to fuel subsequent renewal efforts.

Stage 2 shifts focus to the integration and optimization of the district's internal spatial structure. Building upon the existing street fabric and road network, a phased, incremental renewal strategy is adopted. The district is divided into multiple independently implementable units, with renewal advanced through pilot projects and dynamic adjustments.By reorganizing

underutilized land, introducing courtyards and green spaces, and integrating gray spaces with open ground-floor facades, a continuous pedestrian system and a multi-tiered public space network are established. Simultaneously, mixed-use functions such as office, commercial, and residential spaces are introduced to drive the transformation of the neighborhood from a single-function to a multi-functional complex.

Stage 3 further focuses on the comprehensive rehabilitation of areas with a high proportion of dilapidated housing and the reconstruction of the residential system. Building on land consolidation, a topological reorganization approach is introduced to systematically restructure the previously fragmented spaces.Through architectural consolidation and spatial reorganization, public space resources are released while ensuring the resettlement and rights of original residents. By opening up the abandoned land on the west side to create an entrance plaza, the spatial structure and public nodes are strengthened. Concurrently, the community service facility system is improved, driving the neighborhood's transition from spatial renewal to the reconstruction of the living system.

Overall, the three phases logically form a progressive sequence of "vitality stimulation—structural optimization—systemic reconstruction," corresponding to a path of coordinated development across economic, spatial, and social dimensions. While addressing the complex constraints of historic districts, this phased renewal model reduces risks through incremental implementation and dynamic adjustments. Furthermore, by preserving urban memory during spatial integration and functional reorganization, it offers a practical, actionable pathway for the sustainable renewal of historic districts within a contemporary context.

5.5 Design and Conservation Methods for Revitalizing Urban Memory under Prudent Renewal

5.5.1 Spatial Structure and Architectural Form

Neighborhood renewal should proceed simultaneously on two levels—spatial structure and architectural form—to achieve the continuity of historical fabric and the reconstruction of the public space system. First, regarding spatial integration, by systematically organizing and optimizing open spaces such as plazas and green spaces within the core conservation area, connections between various public spaces are strengthened, gradually constructing a networked public space system.In this process, priority should be given to protecting landscape elements with historical significance—such as ancient trees and wells—within the streets and alleys. By integrating these with continuous arcade facades and utilizing diverse

spatial forms—including pedestrian streets, circular plazas, walkways, and atriums—to gather foot traffic, the vitality of the neighborhood can be enhanced.Simultaneously, for locally inefficient or obstructive buildings, land should be reclaimed through appropriate renovations to incorporate small plazas and green spaces, equipped with recreational, greenery, and landscape facilities to improve the overall environmental quality and provide pleasant activity spaces for residents and tourists. Furthermore, by leveraging the pedestrian and bicycle network to effectively connect various public spaces with commercial and tourism facilities, a continuous and accessible spatial network will be formed, thereby driving the transformation of the neighborhood from piecemeal revitalization to systematic renewal.



Fig.5 -35 Aerial view of the core area of the small park

(Source: Photograph taken by the author)

Regarding the control of architectural fabric, the existing spatial structure should serve as the baseline, with strict regulation of development intensity and building forms. Within the core conservation zone, building density should be limited to 50% or less, and the floor area ratio should not exceed 2.0. New buildings must harmonize with the surrounding environment in terms of scale and height, preserving the dense and continuous character of the Xiao Park's urban fabric.Overall building heights should be limited to 24 meters or less. By harmonizing the relationship between new and existing buildings, we can avoid creating a sense of oppression or fragmentation that would detract from the historic character of the area. At the

same time, unauthorized additions on the top floors of existing buildings must be regulated and rectified: sections without legal title should be demolished, while those with legal title should be set back to create a “low-front, high-rear” spatial relationship, thereby optimizing the street frontage.Through these measures, the overall unity of the block can be maintained while enhancing the sense of openness and visual experience of the street space, allowing a reasonable D/H ratio to further reinforce spatial comfort and the overall perception of the area.

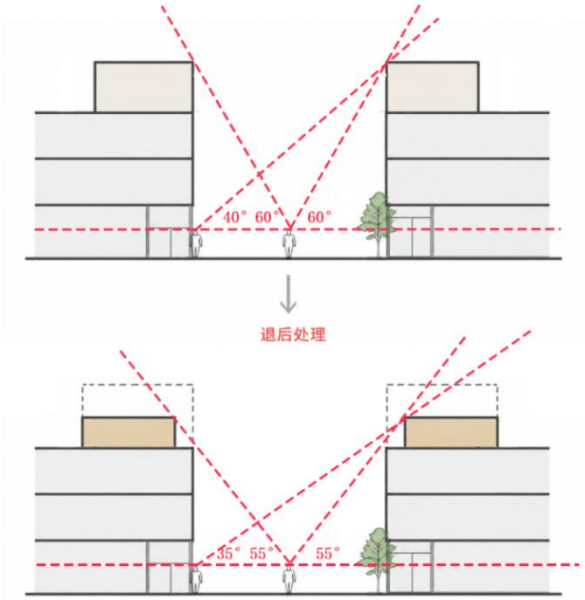


Fig.5 -36 Methods for Optimizing Facades and the D/H Ratio

(Source: Author’s own illustration)

5.5.2 Strategies for the Renewal of Dilapidated Buildings

During the renewal of the Xiaogongyuan treaty port district, a “demolition-reconstruction” strategy should be adopted for dilapidated buildings that have completely collapsed or suffered severe structural damage and cannot be restored to their historical appearance through renovation. While ensuring the continuity of the historical context and the enhancement of spatial quality, the post-demolition sites should be classified and utilized appropriately based on property rights and spatial conditions[55] .

First, for buildings with public ownership or unauthorized additions, the sites should be prioritized for conversion into public service facilities or open spaces—such as plazas and green spaces—to address the shortage of public space in the area and improve overall environmental quality and spatial accessibility.Second, for plots with clear ownership and sufficient conditions for renewal, “demolish the old and build the new” can be implemented on the existing site. By optimizing building massing, interfaces, and facade composition, these structures can meet modern usage needs while maintaining harmony with the overall

character of the neighborhood.Third, for buildings with clear ownership but poor structural quality, reconstruction can be employed to introduce new arcade-style structures. Their design should emphasize “capturing the spirit rather than the form,” echoing the characteristics of traditional arcades in terms of scale, proportion, materials, and color, while avoiding simple replication or pseudo-traditional construction.

In terms of specific design methods, new arcades should reference the architectural order of the surrounding buildings, adhering to the three-part composition of arcade facades and the patterns of bay widths. Through a process of “extraction—translation—reconstruction,” traditional architectural language should be reinterpreted in a contemporary manner. Facade designs should adopt traditional or simplified modernist forms that harmonize with the overall character of the neighborhood, avoiding collage-like or overly symbolic “pseudo-antique” styles.The proportions of doors and windows, the relationship between floor heights, and the continuity of building surfaces should form a cohesive whole with adjacent buildings, collectively shaping a continuous and unified atmosphere in the street space. At the same time, traditional craftsmanship and materials may be appropriately incorporated into the detailing to reinforce cultural expression and local character.

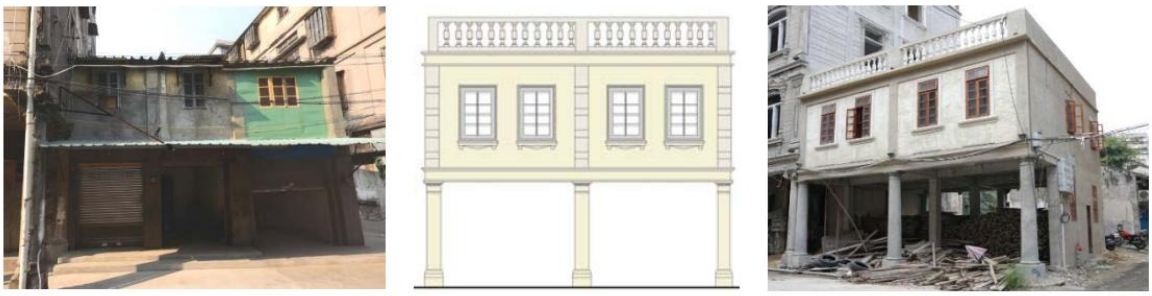


Fig.5 -37 Comparison of Phase 3 Demolition and Reconstruction
(Source: Reference 44)

At the structural and technical levels, new buildings may adopt modern reinforced concrete systems to meet safety and durability requirements, thereby achieving a fusion of traditional spatial forms with modern construction technologies. Overall, this strategy—through “selective demolition and judicious reconstruction”—enhances spatial quality while ensuring the continuity and renewal of the historical context, embodying a reinterpretation of traditional architectural forms and a path toward sustainable development within a contemporary context.

5.5.3 A Renewal Path Centered on Cultural Life

The decline of traditional buildings often stems from a mismatch between their spatial

form and contemporary usage requirements. This mismatch may manifest in the physical structure itself or arise from a disconnect between the types of economic activities the building accommodates and current needs. Therefore, the revitalization of historic buildings is essentially a process of readjusting the relationship between “historical function and modern needs.”On the one hand, physical environmental conditions can be improved through restoration, renovation, and spatial remodeling; on the other hand, the building must be reintegrated into the contemporary urban lifestyle system through functional repurposing, business restructuring, and diversified operational models, thereby achieving sustainable utilization.

The core area of Xiaogongyuan embodies multiple historical dimensions, including the culture of overseas Chinese letters, religious beliefs, the development of a commercial port, and culinary traditions. After completing the protection and restoration of visible contextual elements such as arcade buildings and the street layout, the key to the district’s renewal lies in how to further revitalize and preserve the social memories and cultural significance it embodies.Based on the policy direction of the "Conservation Plan," the results of public surveys, and the district’s inherent cultural resources, its development can be positioned as a mixed-use historic district centered on cultural exhibition, integrating tourism, leisure commerce, and residential living. Through multidimensional collaborative development, the urban Fig of the "Century-Old Commercial Hub" will be gradually redefined.

In terms of specific strategies, the principle of coordinated development between the physical space and intangible cultural heritage should be upheld, with the preservation of the neighborhood’s living atmosphere being particularly crucial.The traditional arcade spatial model of “shops below, residences above” not only embodies the interdependent relationship between commerce and living but also carries rich scenes of daily life and social interaction networks. Preserving residential functions allows the district to maintain a continuous rhythm of life and a sense of human warmth, serving as a vital foundation for the continuity of the historical context. By sustaining residents’ daily routines and neighborhood relationships, diverse activities such as shopping, socializing, and leisure continue to unfold within the district, thereby creating a spatial environment imbued with the authenticity of everyday life.



Fig.5 -38 The "shops below, residences above" spatial model
(Source: Photograph by the author)

This life-centered approach to renewal not only enhances residents' well-being from a "people-oriented" perspective but also helps foster a vibrant, locally distinctive atmosphere. Compared to historic districts focused solely on tourism, spaces grounded in real life possess greater appeal and sustainability, allowing visitors to perceive the district's unique cultural essence through participation and experience. This facilitates the transformation of historic districts from "display spaces" into "living spaces."

5.5.4 Heritage Economy Revitalizes Urban Memory

In the process of historic district revitalization, cultural activities serve as a vital bridge between physical spaces and intangible cultural heritage, acting as a key pathway to invigorate the district and preserve urban memory. Through the "heritage economy" development model[56] , a comprehensive cultural activity system integrating intangible cultural heritage exhibitions, cultural experiences, and traditional commerce can be established within the core area of the Xiaogongyuan Port Opening District. By leveraging a "display-interaction-consumption" linkage mechanism, this approach facilitates the synergistic conversion of cultural value into economic benefits.

Specifically, leveraging Xiaogongyuan's rich local cultural resources, representative cultural events can be organized on a regular or festive basis, such as the folk literary activity "Chenghai Lantern Riddles," the traditional folk performance "Centipede Dance," and the local opera "Chaojue," which uses the Chaozhou dialect as its medium.Such events not only offer strong entertainment value and encourage active participation—effectively drawing crowds of residents and tourists—but also drive the development of surrounding commerce and services through increased foot traffic, creating a virtuous cycle where culture and the economy mutually reinforce one another.

From the perspective of urban memory, these cultural activities are not merely a

reenactment of traditional culture but a continuous interpretation of historical lifestyles and social relationships. As these activities continue on a cyclical or regular basis, they gradually solidify into cultural symbols and spatial events unique to the neighborhood, transforming the small park from a “static historical site” into a “dynamically generated cultural space.”In this process, the neighborhood’s intangible cultural heritage is continuously revitalized and passed down, ultimately forming a “living history” that fosters a sense of local identity. This achieves a multi-faceted win-win scenario encompassing cultural memory, spatial vitality, and economic development.



Fig.5 -39 Photos of holiday events (including Yingge dance, etc.)
(Source: Photographs taken by the author)

5.6 Summary of This Chapter

This chapter takes the Shantou Xiaogongyuan Port Opening Area as its research subject and systematically explores the pathways and methods for historic district renewal within the framework of the “Prudent Urban Renewal” philosophy. Through an examination and analysis of the area’s current conditions, issues such as spatial fragmentation, insufficient public space, and functional inefficiency were identified in terms of street and alley fabric, public space structure, and spatial connectivity, laying the foundation for the subsequent formulation of renewal strategies.

Building on this, and in accordance with the principles of gradualism and controllability emphasized by prudent urban renewal, this chapter proposes a phased renewal pathway progressing from “point-based activation” to “holistic revitalization.”Phase One uses the introduction of commercial activities as a starting point, employing small-scale interventions to revitalize the district and establish a preliminary operational foundation; Phase Two shifts to the integration and optimization of internal spaces, adopting a zoned, incremental renewal

model to gradually improve spatial structure and quality of use through pilot projects and dynamic adjustments; Phase Three focuses on the systematic rehabilitation of areas with a high proportion of dilapidated buildings, achieving the reconstruction of the residential system and the enhancement of public spaces based on plot consolidation and topological reorganization.These three phases form a progressive relationship across temporal and spatial dimensions—moving from the local to the holistic, and from revitalization to reconstruction—embodying the core characteristics of "incremental implementation and continuous refinement" inherent in prudent urban renewal.

Methodologically, supported by the theory of urban memory, this chapter proposes a comprehensive strategy centered on the continuity of spatial structure, control of architectural texture, and flexible renewal mechanisms.On the one hand, the integrity of the historical fabric is maintained through the continuation of street-scale dimensions and spatial relationships; on the other hand, a balance between traditional character and contemporary functional needs is achieved through the principle of "capturing the spirit rather than the form" and moderate, flexible spatial interventions. Concurrently, the introduction of cultural activities and heritage-based economy as operational pillars shifts the focus from static preservation to dynamic transmission of historical and cultural heritage, thereby enhancing the neighborhood's sustained vitality.

Overall, this chapter adopts a prudent approach to urban renewal, combining spatial integration, functional reorganization, and cultural continuity to construct a renewal model characterized by incremental implementation and operational feedback. While mitigating renewal risks, this model comprehensively enhances the spatial quality and living systems of the historic district, providing a practical reference path for the sustainable renewal of similar high-density historic districts in a contemporary context.

Conclusion

Research Conclusions

This study takes the Xiaogongyuan Historic District in Shantou as the research object and focuses on the integration of public space systems and the continuation of urban memory within the context of urban renewal shifting from expansion-oriented development to stock optimization. The research argues that the renewal of historic districts should not remain limited to facade restoration or tourism-oriented development, but should instead pay greater attention to the continuity of public life, spatial relationships, and local identity within historic environments.

Through a review of the evolution of German urban design and the formation of prudent urban renewal, this study interprets prudent urban renewal as a renewal position and practical approach for addressing complex historic district problems. Its core characteristics include gradual renewal, minimal intervention, multi-stakeholder coordination, and the preservation of historical continuity. At the same time, this study discusses its adaptability within the Chinese urban renewal context, emphasizing that prudent urban renewal should not be understood as a direct replication of German experience, but rather as an adaptive translation of gradual renewal, historical preservation, and small-scale intervention under China's specific urban conditions.

From the perspective of urban memory, this study attempts to establish a relationship between "urban memory – spatial carrier – design strategy," transforming historical street textures, arcade interfaces, public activity spaces, and traditional lifestyles into concrete spatial design elements. The research argues that urban memory exists not only in historic buildings themselves, but also in long-term public activities, patterns of spatial use, and local social relationships. Therefore, the renewal of historic districts should reactivate public life through public space integration, pedestrian system optimization, and the restoration of everyday functions, allowing historic spaces to reconnect with contemporary urban life.

At the design practice level, this study selects the Nansheng Department Store block as the design site and proposes a phased renewal strategy based on the logic of "edge intervention, gradual penetration, and systematic integration." Through small-scale and incremental spatial interventions, the project gradually activates public spaces, reconnects internal spatial systems, and optimizes the overall block structure. Meanwhile, the study further proposes design strategies including historical texture continuity, public space reconstruction, mixed-use development, architectural form control, and the relationship

between “rigid control and flexible response,” in order to establish a renewal path that balances historical preservation, spatial revitalization, and contemporary living needs.

The main contributions of this study are reflected in three aspects. First, it attempts to reinterpret historic district renewal from the perspective of urban memory and translate abstract memory concepts into concrete spatial design strategies. Second, it introduces prudent urban renewal as a renewal position and practical approach into the study of the Xiaogongyuan Historic District, while exploring its adaptive application within the Chinese urban renewal context. Third, it proposes a gradual renewal path centered on the integration of public space systems, aiming to establish a more balanced relationship between historical preservation, everyday urban life, and contemporary urban development.

Limitations and Outlook

Due to the limitations of research conditions and methodologies, this study still has several shortcomings. First, the research is mainly based on spatial analysis, case studies, and design speculation, lacking long-term behavioral data and continuous usage feedback. Therefore, the practical effectiveness of the proposed design strategies still requires further verification through long-term implementation and observation.

Second, although this study reviews German prudent urban renewal and discusses its adaptability within the Chinese urban renewal context, the research on implementation mechanisms such as public participation, property-right coordination, and multi-stakeholder collaboration remains relatively limited. The localized implementation path of prudent urban renewal in China still requires further exploration.

In addition, this study mainly proposes renewal strategies from the perspective of spatial design, while discussions regarding policy mechanisms, financial operation, long-term management, and operational models in historic district renewal remain relatively insufficient. In terms of design expression, the current research still focuses primarily on spatial structure and functional organization, while issues such as architectural construction methods, material renewal, and facade restoration details require further investigation.

Future research could strengthen empirical studies and long-term data support, further explore multi-stakeholder collaboration mechanisms and the integrated relationship between “design–operation–management,” and conduct comparative studies across different historic districts. Such research would further enrich the practical application of urban memory and prudent urban renewal in historic district regeneration..

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攻读硕士学位期间取得的研究成果

一、已发表（包括已接受待发表）的论文，以及已投稿、或已成文打算投稿、或拟成文投稿的论文情况**（只填写与学位论文内容相关的部分）：**

序号	作者（全体作者，按顺序排列）	题　　目	发表或投稿刊物名称、级别	发表的卷期、年月、页码	与学位论文哪一部分（章、节）相关	被索引收录情况

注：在“发表的卷期、年月、页码”栏：

1 如果论文已发表，请填写发表的卷期、年月、页码；

2 如果论文已被接受，填写将要发表的卷期、年月；

3 以上都不是，请据实填写“已投稿”，“拟投稿”。

不够请另加页。

二、与学位内容相关的其它成果（包括专利、著作、获奖项目等）

致谢

研究生生涯仿佛在落笔写下“致谢”二字时便即将落幕，这也意味着二十余年的求学之路或许即将画上句号。在这短暂却又漫长的研究生阶段里，我感恩遇见的每一个人，正因为有你们的帮助与陪伴，我才能一步步走到这里。

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四、答辩委员会决议书

答辩委员会对学位（毕业）论文的评语（主要内容包括：1. 论文选题与综述；2. 学术水平与创新性；3. 论文综合能力表现；4. 学位（毕业）论文答辩情况；5. 存在的不足之处和建议等）

论文以汕头小公园历史街区为研究对象，围绕历史街区更新中的空间延续与文化保护问题展开研究，选题具有一定的现实意义与研究价值。论文在德国“谨慎城市更新”相关研究的基础上，结合实地调研与案例分析，对小公园历史街区公共空间更新现状及存在问题进行了基础研究，并提出了更新设计策略与分阶段更新路径。

论文基本达到硕士学位论文要求。答辩过程中，作者回答和解释了答辩委员提出的问题。针对答辩委员会提出的意见，建议对论文进一步修改和完善。

根据投票结果，答辩委员会一致同意通过硕士学位论文答辩，同意其毕业，并建议授予建筑学硕士学位。

论文答辩日期：2026年5月22日　　答辩委员会委员5人

毕业表决票数：通过（5）票；不通过（　）票

学位表决票数：通过（5）票；不通过（　）票

答辩委员会决议（打“√”）：

毕业：通过（√）；不通过（　）

学位：通过（√）；不通过（　）

答辩成员签名	（主席）
答辩秘书签名	