

华南理工大学

South China University of Technology

专业学位硕士学位论文

在地性视角下商业型历史文化街区的活化更新策略研究——以广州状元坊为例

作者姓名	李诗沁
学位类别	建筑学硕士
指导教师	导师组
所在学院	建筑学院
论文提交日期	2026 年 4 月

Research on Renewal Strategies of Commercial Historic Urban Areas from a Perspective of Locality—A Case Study of Zhuangyuanfang in Guangzhou

A Dissertation Submitted for the Degree of Master

Candidate：Li Shiqin

Supervisor：Mentor Group

South China University of Technology

Guangzhou, China

分类号：TU98 **学校代号：10561**

学　号：202321006246

华南理工大学硕士学位论文

在地性视角下商业型历史文化街区的活化更新策略研究——以广州状元坊为例

作者姓名：李诗沁　　指导教师姓名、职称：导师组

申请学位级别：建筑学硕士　　学科专业名称：建筑学

研究方向：城市设计

论文提交日期：2026 年 4 月 17 日　　论文答辩日期：2026 年 5 月 22 日

学位授予单位：华南理工大学　　学位授予日期：　　年　　月　　日

答辩委员会成员：

主席：庄少庞副教授

委员：苏平教授、李敏稚副教授、孙永生教授级高工、Mauro Berta 副教授

华南理工大学
学位论文原创性声明

本人郑重声明：所呈交的论文是本人在导师的指导下独立进行研究所取得的研究成果。除了文中特别加以标注引用的内容外，本论文不包含任何其他个人或集体已经发表或撰写的成果作品。对本文的研究做出重要贡献的个人和集体，均已在文中以明确方式标明。本人完全意识到本声明的法律后果由本人承担。

作者签名：　　日期：2016年 5 月16 日

学位论文版权使用授权书

本学位论文作者完全了解学校有关保留、使用学位论文的规定，即：研究生在校攻读学位期间论文工作的知识产权单位属华南理工大学。学校有权保存并向国家有关部门或机构送交论文的复印件和电子版，允许学位论文被查阅（除在保密期内的保密论文外）；学校可以公布学位论文的全部或部分内容，可以允许采用影印、缩印或其它复制手段保存、汇编学位论文。本人电子文档的内容和纸质论文的内容相一致。

本学位论文属于：

□保密（校保密委员会审定为涉密学位论文时间：___年__月__日），于___年__月__日解密后适用本授权书。

☑不保密，同意在校园网上发布，供校内师生和与学校有共享协议的单位浏览；同意将本人学位论文编入有关数据库进行检索，传播学位论文的全部或部分内容。

（请在以上相应方框内打“√”）

作者签名：　　日期：2016 5 16

指导教师签名：　　日期：2016 5 16

作者联系电话：13107176530　　电子邮箱：lcqroxie1221@163.com

联系地址（含邮编）：华南理工大学五山校区 510630

摘 要

在我国深入推进城市更新与历史文化保护传承的时代背景下，商业型历史文化街区作为承载城市记忆与带动区域经济的双重载体，正面临着同质化开发、“文化空心化”及空间肌理破损等共性困境。在地性理念强调尊重特定地域的自然环境、历史文脉、社会习俗与生活方式，为破解上述难题提供了全新的理论视角与解决思路。

广州状元坊作为拥有 700 余年发展历史的岭南广府商业型历史街区，是广州千年商都商贸文化与广绣、粤剧戏服制作等非遗技艺的核心承载地，2010 年左右发展式微，亟需适配的活化更新方案。

本研究综合运用文献研究法，梳理并构建了商业型历史街区在地性特征识别的理论分析框架。采用实地调研与 Mapping 图分析法，从物质空间、历史文脉、特色业态与社会网络四大维度对状元坊进行现状问题诊断，并结合案例分析，借鉴国内外商业型历史街区的成功经验，探索普适性的更新策略与实践范式。

本研究构建了商业型历史街区在地性特征识别的一般框架，基于此提出了以在地性为导向的系统活化更新策略，包括文化基因传承、特色业态活化、空间肌理延续与社会网络更新，并将策略落位于状元坊四大核心沿街商业节点设计，验证了策略的实操性与有效性 。

在创新维度上，本研究将研究视角的整合创新，综合各类分析方法，将历史文脉、特色业态、空间特征、社会网络深度耦合，最后将更新模式的精细化落地，实现了从宏观策略框架到微观节点设计的动态反馈，为高密度老城商业街区的“针灸式”微更新提供了具有实操参考价值的实践样本。

关键词：在地性；商业型历史街区；城市更新；状元坊街区

Abstract

Against the backdrop of my country's in-depth promotion of urban renewal and the protection and inheritance of historical and cultural heritage, commercial historical and cultural blocks, as carriers of urban memory and drivers of regional economies, are facing common dilemmas such as homogeneous development, "cultural hollowing out," and damage to spatial fabric. The concept of site-specificity, emphasizing respect for the natural environment, historical context, social customs, and lifestyles of a specific region, offers a new theoretical perspective and solution to these problems.

Guangzhou Zhuangyuanfang, a Lingnan Cantonese commercial historic district with over 700 years of history, is a core carrier of Guangzhou's millennium-old commercial culture and intangible cultural heritage techniques such as Cantonese embroidery and Cantonese opera costume making. Its development declined in the 2010s, urgently requiring a suitable revitalization and renewal plan.

This study comprehensively utilizes literature review to organize and construct a theoretical analytical framework for identifying the local characteristics of commercial historical districts. Employing field research and mapping analysis, it diagnoses the current problems of Zhuangyuanfang from four dimensions: physical space, historical context, distinctive business formats, and social networks. Furthermore, by combining case studies and drawing on successful experiences of commercial historical districts both domestically and internationally, it explores universally applicable renewal strategies and practical paradigms.

This study constructs a general framework for identifying the local characteristics of commercial historical districts. Based on this framework, it proposes a local-oriented system revitalization and renewal strategy, including the inheritance of cultural genes, revitalization of distinctive business formats, continuation of spatial texture, and renewal of social networks. The strategy is applied to the design of the four core street-front commercial nodes of Zhuangyuanfang, and its practicality and effectiveness are verified.

In terms of innovation, this study integrates and innovates research perspectives, synthesizing various analytical methods to deeply couple historical context, distinctive business formats, spatial characteristics, and social networks. Finally, it refines and implements the renewal model, achieving dynamic feedback from the macro-strategic framework to the micro-node design. This provides a practical and valuable sample for the "acupuncture-style" micro-renewal of high-density old town commercial districts.

Keywords: Locality; Commercial Historic District; Urban Renewal; Zhuangyuanfang District

Contents

摘 要 I
Abstract II
Contents III
List of Figures VII
List of Tables XI
Chapter 1 Introduction 1
1.1 Research Background 1
1.1.1 Policy Orientation for Historical and Cultural Preservation in the Context of Urban Renewal 1
1.1.2 Common Challenges in Renewal of Commercial Historic Districts 1
1.1.3 Local Characteristic Requirements for Commercial Historic District Renovation 1
1.2 Research Objective and Significance 2
1.2.1 Research Objective 2
1.2.2 Research Significance 3
1.3 Literature Review 5
1.3.1 Theoretical Research on Locality Correlation 5
1.3.2 Current Research of Historic District Renovation 12
1.3.3 Current Research of Zhuangyuanfang District in Guangzhou 17
1.3.4 Review of Current Research 19
1.4 Research Subjects 21
1.4.1 Historic District 21
1.4.2 Commercial Historic Districts 21
1.4.3 Zhuangyuanfang District, Guangzhou 21
1.5 Research Methods and Research Framework 22
1.5.1 Research Methods 22
1.5.2 Research Framework 23
Chapter 2 Theoretical Foundations and Framework Development 25
2.1 Definition of Core Concepts 25
2.1.1 Locality 25
2.1.2 Historic District 25

2.2 Theoretical Foundation Research on "Locality" 25
2.2.1 Origin of the "Locality" Theory 26
2.2.2 "Locality" and Urban Morphology Typology Research 26
2.2.3 "Locality" and Local Construction 28
2.3 Theoretical Foundation Research on Urban Renewal 29
2.3.1 Organic Renewal Theory 29
2.3.2 Micro-Renewal Theory 30
2.4 Study on Local Characteristics of Commercial Historic Districts 32
2.4.1 Historical Context 32
2.4.2 Distinctive Business 34
2.4.3 Spatial Form 36
2.4.4 Social Networks 41
2.5 Construction of Theoretical Framework 42
Chapter 3 Current Situation Research of Zhuangyuanfang 44
3.1 Overview of Zhuangyuanfang District 44
3.2 Historical Context of Zhuangyuanfang District 45
3.2.1 Historical and Cultural Status 45
3.2.2 Historical Origins 46
3.2.3 Core Cultural Connotation 47
3.3 Distinctive Business Formats in Zhuangyuanfang District 49
3.3.1 Full Industrial Chain of Guangzhou Embroidery 49
3.3.2 Yue Opera Costume Production 50
3.4 Local Spatial Characteristics of Zhuangyuanfang District 51
3.4.1 Spatial Overview of Materials 51
3.4.2 Street Texture 55
3.4.3 Building Types 71
3.5 Social Network in Zhuangyuanfang Neighborhood 74
3.5.1 Neighborhood Interaction Network 74
3.5.2 Business Collaboration Network 74
3.5.3 Community Management District 75
3.6 Summary of This Chapter 76
Chapter 4 Renewal Strategies for Zhuangyuanfang District 78
4.1 Conservation Requirements for Zhuangyuanfang District 78
4.1.1 Protection Scope and Traditional Alleys 78
4.1.2 Requirements for Activation Utilization and Cultural Heritage Preservation 79

4.1.3 Supporting Facilities and Environmental Improvement Requirements 80
4.2 Case Analysis 80
4.2.1 Historic District Renovation of Jiangmen Changdi 80
4.2.2 Renovation of Ichiban Street in Kawagoe City, Japan 85
4.3.3 Regent Street Renewal Design in London, UK 90
4.3 Inheritance of Indigenous Cultural Genes 94
4.3.1 Construction of a Network for Local Cultural Sites 94
4.3.2 Characteristic Cultural Activities 96
4.4 Revitalization of Local Characteristic Business Forms 98
4.4.1 Experiential Commercial Transformation of Traditional Handicrafts 98
4.4.2 Introduction of Supporting Commercial Facilities to Meet Community Needs 99
4.4.3 Improvement of Traditional Business Models 100
4.5 Continuity of Local Spatial Texture 102
4.5.1 Spatial Structure Optimization 102
4.5.2 Functional Space Replacement 103
4.5.3 Creation of Distinctive Places 106
4.5.4 Building Unit Renovation 107
4.6 Inclusive Renewal of Local Social Networks 110
4.6.1 Retention and Cultivation of Inclusive Communities 110
4.6.2 Trade Network Development 111
4.6.3 Integration of Migrant Population 112
4.7 Summary of This Chapter 113
Chapter 5 Design of Commercial Node Space along Zhuangyuanfang Street 115
5.1 Overall Design Concept 115
5.1.1 Design Principles 115
5.1.2 Core Design Scope 116
5.1.3 Functional Guidance for Commercial Spaces 116
5.1.4 Public Space Control 117
5.1.5 Traffic Organization and Flow Line Design 119
5.2 Zhuangyuanfang Comprehensive Cultural and Creative Market 120
5.2.1 Overview of Node Design 120
5.2.2 Zhuangyuanfang Historical and Cultural Exhibition Hall 122
5.2.3 Intangible Cultural Heritage Creative Goods Store 125
5.2.4 Creative Retail 128

5.3 Zhuangyuanfang Guangzhou Embroidery Exhibition and Trade Cluster 130
5.3.1 Overview of Node Design 130
5.3.2 Current Issue Diagnosis 131
5.3.3 Renovation Design Strategy 132
5.4 Zhuangyuanfang Commercial and Residential Hub 135
5.4.1 Overview of Node Design 135
5.4.2 Current Issue Diagnosis 136
5.4.3 Renovation Design Strategy 137
5.5 Zhangyuanfang-Tiancheng Road Community Integrated Commercial Complex 140
5.5.1 Node Positioning and Design Principle 140
5.5.2 Current Strengths and Optimization Directions 141
5.5.3 Renovation Design Strategy 142
5.6 Summary of This Chapter 145
Conclusion and Prospects 148
Main Conclusion 148
Innovation Points 148
Research Prospect 149
Reference 151
Achievements 159

List of Figures

Figure 1-1 Former prosperity scene of Zhuangyuanfang 2
Figure 1-2 Analysis of Geographic Research Attention Index 10
Figure 1-3 Research Framework Diagram 24
Figure 2-1 Space Gene Theory in Local Design Method 28
Figure 2-2 Conceptual diagram of micro-renewal 31
Figure 2-3 Fishbone-like street texture of Nantou Ancient City 37
Figure 2-4a Courtyard layout of Chengdu Shaocheng 40
Figure 2-4b Diverse Courtyard Spaces in Chengdu Shaocheng 40
Figure 2-5 Theoretical Framework 43
Figure 3-1 Research Scope of Zhuangyuanfang District 44
Figure 3-2a Location of Zhuangyuanfang in Renmin South Historic District 45
Figure 3-2b Zoning of Renminnan Historic District 45
Figure 3-3 Location of Zhuangyuanfang Block within Guangzhou City Wall 46
Figure 3-4 Historical Development Stages of Zhuangyuanfang 47
Figure 3-5 Culture of Guangdong Opera Costumes at Zhuangyuanfang 48
Figure 3-6 Photo of Zhuangyuanfang Costume Factory 51
Figure 3-7 Building Height Analysis of Zhuangyuanfang District 51
Figure 3-8 Quality Analysis Diagram of Buildings in Zhuangyuanfang District 52
Figure 3-9 Analysis of Construction Periods in Zhuangyuanfang Neighborhood 53
Figure 3-10a Functional Analysis Figure 3-10b Compatibility Analysis 53
Figure 3-11 Evolution of Spatial Structure in Zhuangyuanfang Neighborhood 54
Figure 3-12 Overview of Street Texture in Zhuangyuanfang District 55
Figure 3-13 Building Scope and Current Function Along Urban Roads 57
Figure 3-14 Continuous Architectural Features and Key Buildings of Yide Road 58
Figure 3-15a Current status of nodes in Datongfang Commercial Building 58
Figure 3-15b Typical cross-section of Yide Road 58
Figure 3-16 Photos of Renmin South Road 59
Figure 3-17 Typical cross-section of Renmin South Road 60
Figure 3-18 Vacant No.140 Renmin South Road 60
Figure 3-19 Accessibility and Photos of Daxin Road Alleys 61
Figure 3-20 Accessibility and current status photos of Tiancheng Road streets 62
Figure 3-21 Typical road cross-section of Tiancheng Road 62

Figure 3-22 Research scope of Zhuangyuanfang Community 63
Figure 3-23 Photos of first-floor functions and current status of Zhuangyuanfang 63
Figure 3-24 Accessibility of Zhuangyuanfang Street 65
Figure 3-25 Research Scope of Xianleli 66
Figure 3-26 Functional Layout and Photos of the First Floor of Xianleli 66
Figure 3-27 Accessibility of Xianleli Street Alleys 66
Figure 3-28 Typical Road Cross-section in Xianleli 67
Figure 3-29 Research Scope of Yan Gong Street 68
Figure 3-30 Functional layout and photos of the ground floor of Yan Gong Street 68
Figure 3-31 Scale variation of Yan Gong Street 69
Figure 3-32 Comprehensive Analysis Diagram of Secondary Streets in the Site 70
Figure 4-1 Protection Scope of Zhuangyuanfang Block and Traditional Streets 78
Figure 4-2 Scope of Jiangmen Changdi Historic District 80
Figure 4-3a Schematic diagram of road traffic planning 81
Figure 4-3b Schematic diagram of public space opening system 81
Figure 4-4 Distribution map of Changdi historic district features 82
Figure 4-5 Typological Study on Arcade Architecture in the Changdi Historic District 83
Figure 4-6 Schematic reconstruction of arcade in the Changdi Historic District 83
Figure 4-7 Realistic photos of Ichiban Street in Kawagoe City 86
Figure 4-8a Conservation planning for traditional architecture on Ichiban Street 87
Figure 4-8b Schematic diagram of exterior appearance with black plastering 87
Figure 4-9 Local Cultural and Tourism Resources of Ogawa-Kawagoe 89
Figure 4-10 Schematic Diagram of Tourism and Cultural Space Integration 90
Figure 4-11 Spatial Pattern of Regent Street 91
Figure 4-12 Schematic diagram of spatial nodes and visual guidance on Regent Street 92
Figure 4-13 Typical cross-section and circular design of Regent Street 93
Figure 4-14 Schematic diagram of business format renewal 94
Figure 4-15 Cultural Location of Zhuangyuanfang District 95
Figure 4-16 Cultural Visual Identity of Yongqingfang 96
Figure 4-17 Characteristic cultural activities in Nantou Ancient City 97
Figure 4-18 Integrated Operation Model of Spot Market and Exhibition-Market 101
Figure 4-19 Current condition photo of No.27 Zhuangyuanfang 102
Figure 4-20a Spatial Structure Renewal Strategy for Zhuangyuanfang 103
Figure 4-20b Renewal Strategy for Core Commercial Spaces in Zhangyuanfang 103

Figure 4-21 Schematic diagram of characteristic place creation 107
Figure 4-22a bamboo tube house 108
Figure 4-22b Facade restoration with essential feature extraction 108
Figure 4-23 Bamboo tube house renovation using the folding method 109
Figure 4-24 ground floor renovation for residential buildings 110
Figure 5-1 Site Plan 115
Figure 5-2 Schematic diagram of core design scope definition 116
Figure 5-3 Schematic diagram of commercial space functional guidance 117
Figure 5-4 Schematic diagram of public space control 118
Figure 5-5 Refined management practices for commercial buildings 119
Figure 5-6 Schematic diagram of traffic organization 120
Figure 5-7a General Layout Plan of Cultural and Creative Market 121
Figure 5-7b Axonometric of the cultural and creative market axis 121
Figure 5-8a Original architectural texture 122
Figure 5-8b Partial demolition 122
Figure 5-8c Pedestrian flowline guidance 122
Figure 5-9 Current Status of Buildings #94 and #96 in Zhuangyuanfang 123
Figure 5-10a Schematic diagram of current first-floor functions in the building 124
Figure 5-10b Schematic diagram of post-renovation floor plan functions 124
Figure 5-11a Schematic diagram of the renovated facade 125
Figure 5-11b Schematic diagram of ground-floor setback control 125
Figure 5-12 Current status photos of Zhuangyuanfang #97 and #99 126
Figure 5-13a Floor plan of current building status 127
Figure 5-13b Schematic diagram of post-modification planar function 127
Figure 5-14a Spatial Transformation Figure 5-14b Diagram of Facade 128
Figure 5-15 Photos of Zhuangyuanfang No.78, No.76, and No.74 128
Figure 5-16 Current function 128
Figure 5-17 Building Block Renovation 129
Figure 5-18 Planar functional layout 129
Figure 5-19 Section of vertical functions in creative retail 130
Figure 5-20 Current status of Zhuangyuanfang No.69-79 (odd-numbered units) 131
Figure 5-21a Plan view of the exhibition and trade cluster 132
Figure 5-21b Axonometric schematic diagram of the exhibition and trade cluster 132
Figure 5-22 Spatial Texture Renovation 133

Figure 5-23a Floor plan 134
Figure 5-23b Functional Layout 134
Figure 5-24 Schematic diagram of commercial interface renewal 135
Figure 5-24a Plan view of commercial-residential hub 136
Figure 5-24b Axonometric schematic diagram of commercial-residential hub axis 136
Figure 5-25 Current status photo of dynamic gathering venues 137
Figure 5-26 Commercial-residential hub functional layout 137
Figure 5-27 Continuous commercial interface renovation 139
Figure 5-28 Commercial interface design guidance 140
Figure 5-29a Photos of Xianleli public space 142
Figure 5-29b Cross-section of public space 142
Figure 5-30a Floor plan of community ground-floor commercial units 143
Figure 5-30b Community commercial nodes 143
Figure 5-31 Layout of public space in the front plaza of the building's ground floor 144
Figure 5-32 Public space hierarchy in the front plaza of the building's ground floor 144
Figure 5-33 Schematic diagram of facade restoration 145

List of Tables

Table 1-1 Summary of Overseas Research on Locality Theory 8
Continued Table 1-1 Summary of Overseas Research on Locality Theory 9
Table 1-2 Summary of Domestic Research on Building Locality Theory 12
Table 3-1 Classification Overview of Streets and Alleys in Zhangyuanfang 56
Table 3-2 Overview of Sub-street Scale for Sites 71
Table 3-3 Summary of Building Types in Zhuangyuanfang District 73
Continued Table 3-3 Summary of Building Types in Zhuangyuanfang District 74
Table 3-4 Social Management Network Hierarchical Structure 76
Table 4-1 Protection Types and Requirements for Streets and Alleys in Zhuangyuanfang 79
Table 4-2 Spatial Mixed Use Modes 106

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Policy Orientation for Historical and Cultural Preservation in the Context of Urban Renewal

Against the backdrop of China's high-quality urbanization and deepening urban renewal strategies, historical and cultural districts have emerged as vital platforms for preserving urban memories, transmitting regional cultural heritage, and showcasing local characteristics. Their conservation and revitalization have become crucial approaches to addressing urban homogenization while achieving a win-win balance between cultural preservation and economic development. The national government has issued a series of policy documents, including the "Opinions on Strengthening Historical and Cultural Protection in Urban and Rural Construction" and the "Urban Renewal Action Implementation Plan," explicitly advocating the principle of "protection first, adaptive reuse." These initiatives aim to facilitate seamless integration between historical districts and modern lifestyles and commercial development, avoiding the pitfalls of uniform development patterns and highlighting the unique cultural identity of each neighborhood [114].

1.1.2 Common Challenges in Renewal of Commercial Historic Districts

Commercial heritage districts function as "windows" for cultural continuity and "engines" for economic growth. However, many Chinese revitalization projects struggle with imbalances: either over-commercialization leads to "cultural hollowing-out," or rigid preservation results in stagnant vitality. Neglecting local spatial textures and traditions in favor of generic formats erodes regional identity. This "form-over-substance" approach fragments historical continuity and fails to meet modern demands for both consumption and preservation.

1.1.3 Local Characteristic Requirements for Commercial Historic District Renovation

Locality-oriented concepts offer innovative solutions for revitalizing commercial historical districts by advocating for "local symbiosis" — the integration of cultural DNA, spatial texture, and community vitality. While this approach aligns with the dual nature of culture and commerce, current implementations remain superficial. A research gap persists in systematic, scalable strategies for ancient districts with millennia-old heritage, where deep cultural transformation is still lacking.

Originally named Taitongfang, Zhuangyuanfang was renamed after Zhang Zhensun, the Song Dynasty imperial examination champion who resided here. In its heyday, the area served as a hub for gold-plated jewelry and theatrical costume production, with the jewelry shop "Zhu Yisheng" —a local slang term for "floating goods" —operating within its boundaries. Following China's reform and opening-up, Zhuangyuanfang became a trendy destination for young shoppers seeking fashionable apparel and luggage (Figure1-1) . However, the alleyway gradually narrowed from the southern side of Renmin South Street toward Tiancheng Road, creating significant safety hazards. After 2010, it declined alongside the Shangxiajiu area.



Source: Internet

Figure 1-1 Former prosperity scene of Zhuangyuanfang

Zhuangyuanfang district today has long lost its former bustling atmosphere, with at least one-third of the shops in the alleyways remaining vacant, while the remaining spaces are predominantly used for storage purposes. Following the decline in popularity of Zhuangyuanfang, the Guangzhou Municipal Government has repeatedly proposed renovation plans for the area, yet none have been officially implemented to date.

1.2 Research Objective and Significance

1.2.1 Research Objective

This study is grounded in the contemporary context of high-quality urban renewal and the development of historical-cultural preservation systems in China. Addressing core challenges prevalent in commercial historical district revitalization, adopting the locality

theory as research framework. Focusing on the pivotal issues of revitalizing commercial historical districts, the research clarifies the synergistic logic between heritage conservation and adaptive development, while exploring sustainable renewal pathways that integrate cultural continuity, commercial revitalization, and community coexistence. The specific research objectives are outlined below:

(1) Theoretical Analysis Framework for Revitalization and Renewal of Commercial Historic Districts from a Systemic Local Perspective

By integrating core theories such as locality and organic renewal, this study defines the essential connotations and structural dimensions of locality in commercial historical and cultural districts. It clarifies the intrinsic connections between four key elements — local cultural context, spatial texture, social networks, and indigenous business formats — and district revitalization efforts.

(2) Establishing a locality-oriented revitalization strategy system of commercial historic districts in China

Based on the identified dilemmas, this study constructs a systematic renewal strategy across five dimensions: spatial texture, characteristic commerce, cultural genes, social networks, and ecological base. Moving beyond single-dimensional approaches, this framework integrates heritage protection with commercial and community symbiosis, providing a standardized paradigm for revitalizing similar historical districts.

(3) Taking Guangzhou Zhuangyuanfang Commercial Historical and Cultural Block as a case study, the implementation and effectiveness validation of the renewal strategy system were completed.

To address challenges like deteriorated texture, over-commercialization, and cultural disconnection, this study applied its localized renewal framework to the Zhuangyuanfang District. By implementing strategies for positioning, mixed-use zoning, and adaptive renovation, the study validated the framework's effectiveness. This provides a replicable model for revitalizing commercial historical districts across Guangzhou and the Lingnan region.

1.2.2 Research Significance

1.2.1.1 Academic Significance

(1) Establishing a Systematic Analysis Framework for Local Characteristics Adapted to Commercial Historic Districts

Building upon core theories including critical regionalism, spatial genes, and organic renewal, this study addresses the dual attributes and developmental characteristics of commercial historical districts. Through four key dimensions—spatial morphology, historical context, distinctive business and social networks —the research systematically deciphers the core components and intrinsic connections of locality in commercial historical districts. It transforms abstract locality theories into a systematic analytical framework that is identifiable, analyzable, and evaluable, thereby refining localized adaptation systems for locality theory within commercial historical district subfields.

(2) Establishing a locality-oriented systematic revitalization strategy framework for commercial historical districts

This study establishes a systematic, localized renewal framework for China's commercial historical districts, focusing on four dimensions: architectural texture, distinctive business formats, cultural heritage, and social networks. By integrating historical preservation with commercial and community synergy, this multidimensional approach provides standardized methodological guidance and replicable models for similar districts..

(3) Enriched the sub-analysis of commercial historical districts with distinctive Lingnan Cantonese regional characteristics

Using Guangzhou Zhuangyuanfang as a case study, this study delves into the distinctive local characteristics of Cantonese regional culture, Lingnan trade traditions, and traditional urban lifestyles. It develops an adaptive renewal strategy system tailored to Lingnan's unique climate, cultural context, and consumption patterns, thereby enriching academic research on regional historical district revitalization in China. The study provides substantial case evidence and empirical references for similar neighborhood renewal initiatives across Lingnan regions.

1.2.1.2 Practical Significance

(1) Addressing the current developmental challenges in Guangzhou's Zhuangyuanfang district and providing operational guidance for its renovation and upgrading

As a former Cantonese trade landmark, Guangzhou’s Zhuangyuanfang now suffers from high vacancy, aging formats, spatial decay, and fire hazards. Using field surveys and a place-based perspective, this study diagnoses these deficits and proposes four key renewal strategies. These actionable solutions aim to balance cultural preservation with commercial rejuvenation, providing a model for operational management.

(2) To provide replicable practical models for the revitalization and renewal of similar

commercial historical districts in Guangzhou and the Lingnan region

Guangzhou's old town features numerous districts — like Shangxiajiu and Thirteen Factories—that share Zhuangyuanfang's challenges of homogenization and declining vitality. This study's localized strategy aligns with Lingnan's climate, Cantonese trade traditions, and regional consumption patterns. It offers a replicable pathway for revitalizing similar districts across the Lingnan region, ensuring both dynamic heritage preservation and sustainable commercial growth.

(3) Provide localized practical approaches for the renewal of commercial historical and cultural districts in China

To counter the blind replication of foreign models and subsequent "cultural hollowing," this study proposes a localized renewal framework for Chinese historic districts. Centered on "culture as core, space as foundation, commerce as utility, and community as cornerstone," this strategy respects indigenous traditions to balance preservation and development. It offers a tailored solution to achieve coordinated cultural, commercial, and social growth.

(4) Facilitating the inheritance of urban historical cultural heritage and the shaping of urban characteristics, serving the construction goals of historic and cultural cities

In the context of new urbanization, revitalizing historical districts is crucial for combating urban homogenization. Through innovative strategies, this study transforms Guangzhou's Zhuangyuanfang from a declining commercial space into a Cantonese cultural landmark. This effort supports Guangzhou's historic status and provides a practical model for sustaining urban cultural continuity across China.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Theoretical Research on Locality Correlation

1.3.1.1 Review of Foreign Locality-Related Theories

(1) The Emergence of the Concept of "Local Area" from a Sociological Perspective

In the early 20th century, sociology began exploring the relationship between "place" and human social behavior, challenging the purely physical interpretation of space by geography. Early scholars such as Ferdinand Tonnies and Georg Simmel made significant contributions. Tonnies, in his seminal work *Community and Civil Society*, introduced the concept of "community", emphasizing that place serves as a vessel for emotional connections and ethical relationships among individuals rather than mere geographical space. This perspective encapsulates the core essence of "locality" —the uniqueness of a place stems from its social relations and collective memory [5]. Simmel further elaborated in *Sociology of Space*, arguing

that space is not a passive backdrop but a product of human social interactions, with the value of place lying in the communicative practices within it [9]. These insights laid the theoretical foundation for subsequent research on the connection between "locality" and "social contexts."

(2) In-depth Research on the Deepening of "Local Sense" under the Humanistic Turn

The mid-20th century witnessed the rise of humanistic sociology and human geography, which propelled research on locality to expand from "social relations" to encompass "emotions and culture." A pivotal milestone was the conceptualization and refinement of the "sense of place" framework, with Yi-Fu Tuan's seminal work standing as its most representative example. In his seminal work *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, Tuan explicitly defined "place" as a space imbued with meaning through emotional engagement and experiential accumulation, while "sense of place" refers to an individual's subjective emotional attachment and cultural identity toward a specific location [6]. Distinct from objective spatial perception, this theory pioneered the deep integration of "locality" with "emotional value" and "cultural significance," fundamentally challenging the instrumentalized understanding of place prevalent in earlier scholarship.

During the same period, the development of phenomenological sociology further enriched the theoretical connotations of locality. Martin Heidegger proposed the concept of "Poetic Living" in *Being and Time*, emphasizing the "existential connection" between human existence and specific places. He argued that locality serves as a medium for self-awareness and spiritual belonging, and this philosophical interpretation of the relationship between "place and human existence" provided core ideological support for extending locality theory into architecture—specifically, spatial design must respond to human emotional needs and existential experiences [7]. Additionally, British sociologist Roland Robertson introduced the concept of "locality" into sociocultural studies in the 1990s, formally proposing the notion of "glocalization." He posited that globalization and locality are mutually reinforcing processes[8], further solidifying locality's core value as a defense against homogenization and a means to highlight regional uniqueness, thereby laying the theoretical foundation for subsequent interdisciplinary research.

(3) Research on the Theory of "Locality" in Architecture

In the 1960s, the homogenization crisis of modernist architecture's "International Style" became increasingly apparent. Architects began reevaluating the relationship between "architecture and place," drawing on sociological concepts of "sense of place" and "cultural identity" to develop early regionalism architectural theories, marking the formal introduction

of locality theory into architecture. The defining characteristic of this phase was the "return to local context," emphasizing that architectural designs must adapt to natural environments, climatic conditions, and folk cultures while rejecting standardized designs detached from regional characteristics. Alvar Aalto's works integrated Finland's natural landscapes and climate features, utilizing native timber and stone materials to create buildings that combined functionality with regional identity. His core philosophy posited that "architecture serves as an intermediary between nature and humanity," transforming sociological perspectives on "local sentiment" into tangible architectural language. Luis Barragan, on the other hand, focused on Mexican regional culture, incorporating local folk elements and spatial configurations into architectural designs. He emphasized the symbiotic relationship between architecture and local culture, breaking away from the singular aesthetic paradigm of modernist architecture. Moreover, in the 1970s, American artist R. Serra introduced the concept of 'site-specificity,' emphasizing that artistic creation must be grounded in the unique characteristics of a particular location. This idea was later adopted by the architectural community, further advancing the integration of locality with architectural practice.

In the 1980s, architectural theorists Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre first proposed the concept of "Critical Regionalism" [10]. Kenneth Frampton later systematically expanded this theory in his 1983 publication *Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance*, marking the maturation of locality theory in architecture and its complete transition from sociological abstraction to systematic architectural theory[11].

Kenneth Frampton's central thesis posits that critical regionalism is not merely a "retro" movement or "piling up local elements," but rather a "resistive" architectural practice. It combats both the homogenization and cultural erosion of modernist architecture and the crude imitation of local cultures by postmodernism. The approach advocates for architecture to "take root locally" while embracing advanced global construction technologies and concepts, achieving a "unity of universality and particularity" [11]. Its core principles encompass three dimensions: Firstly, respecting local natural environments by emphasizing the dialectical integration of buildings with terrain, climate, and landscapes, while avoiding excessive site intervention. Secondly, uncovering local cultural DNA by transforming spatial customs, construction techniques, and cultural symbols into modern architectural language rather than mechanically replicating traditional forms. Thirdly, emphasizing "tactile sensitivity" to prioritize users' experiential value in architectural spaces, fostering emotional connections between people and their surroundings—a concept aligned with sociological perspectives on "sense of place."

Kenneth Frampton further elaborated on the practical approach of critical regionalism by citing works by architects such as Alvar Aalto, Jørn Utzon, and Alvaro Siza, emphasizing that architecture should highlight local uniqueness through material selection, structural design, and form design. Concurrently, Christopher Alexander proposed in *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* that urban and architectural space creation should adhere to "local natural and social laws," highlighting spatial complexity and locality while opposing mechanical standardized designs [13]. His philosophy aligns with postmodernism's pursuit of diversity and regional characteristics, enriching the theoretical framework of locality in architectural studies by extending "locality" from "cultural expression" to the entire process of "spatial production."

Table 1-1 Summary of Overseas Research on Locality Theory

Source: summarized by author based on reference

Discipline Field	**author**	**Related works**	**central idea**
sociology	Ferdinand Tonnies	*Community and Civil Society*	The concept of "community" is proposed, emphasizing that local areas serve as carriers of emotional connections and ethical relationships among individuals, with the core implication of locality.
	Georg Simmel	*Sociology of Space*	Space is not a passive backdrop but a product of human social interactions, where local value emerges from human engagement practices.
	Yi-Fu Tuan	*Space and Place: A Perspective from Experience*	It clearly defines "place" as a space endowed with human significance and proposes the concept of "sense of place".
	Martin Heidegger	*Being and Time*	The concept of "poetic dwelling" was proposed, emphasizing the "existential connection" between human existence and specific places.
	R. Roland Robertson	No specific works identified (the concept was formally proposed in the 1990s)	The concept of 'Glocalization' was formally proposed, positing that globalization and localization are mutually reinforcing processes.
art	Richard Serra	No specific publications identified (core concepts proposed)	The concept of 'site-specificity' was proposed, emphasizing that artistic creation must be grounded in the uniqueness of specific locations.

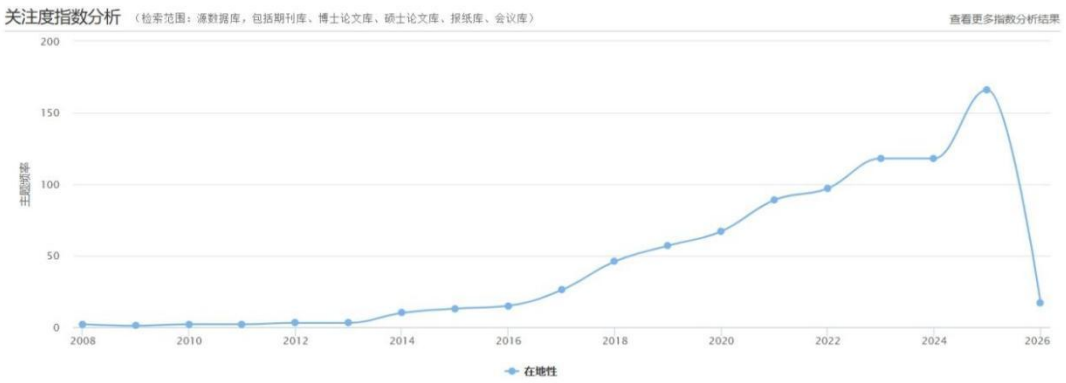
Continued Table 1-1 Summary of Overseas Research on Locality Theory

Discipline Field	author	Related works	central idea
Architecture	Alvar Aalto	No clearly defined core monograph (centered on artistic practice)	He advocates architecture as an intermediary between nature and humanity, transforming local sentiments from a sociological perspective into concrete architectural language.
	Luis Barragan	No clearly defined core monograph (centered on artistic practice)	With a focus on Mexican regional culture, the architectural design integrates local folk elements and spatial forms, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between architecture and local culture.
	Alexander Tzonis, Liane Lefaivre	*Critical Regionalism: Architecture and the Identity of a Globalized World*	He first proposed the concept of "Critical Regionalism," laying the foundation for locality theory in architectural studies.
	Kenneth Frampton	*.Towards a Critical Regionalism.:Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance*	The system deepens the theory of critical regionalism, advocating that architecture should be 'rooted in local contexts, resisting homogenization and poor imitation while balancing local characteristics with global advanced technologies.
	Christopher Alexander	*Building Pattern Language*	Urban and architectural space creation should follow local natural and social laws, emphasizing the complexity and locality of space.

1.4.1.2 Review of Intrinsic Correlation Theory in China

(1) Domestic research attention on intraspecific studies continues to rise

Research on place-based theory in China began in 2008. Around 2017, theoretical attention saw a continuous annual increase (Figure 1-2), coinciding with the slowdown in urban construction speed and the entry into an era of stock renewal. Both theoretical research and design practices started to explore place-based approaches.



Source: CNKI

Figure 1-2 Analysis of Geographic Research Attention Index

(2) Domestic Research on Locality Theory in Architecture

The significant domestic attention to the theory of architectural locality originated from Taiwanese scholar Luo Shiwei in 2013. The article provides an in-depth analysis of the architectural practices of Taiwanese local architects such as Huang Shengyuan and Hsieh Ying-chun in Taiwanese communities, emphasizing the shared temporal dimension of regional and local differences and connections inherent in their works, and describes this concept using the term "locality" [21]. This marks the first time the term "locality" was proposed in Chinese.

Han Dongqing (2013) explores why local construction—being an inevitable component within architectural contexts — has emerged as a focal point. He identifies current shortcomings in local construction practices and proposes three key directions for reflection: acute awareness through broadened perspectives; the spatiotemporal framework underpinning local construction[23];and architects' need to re-engage with construction sites. Duan Jin (2019), drawing from urban spatial development theories and international morphotype studies, introduced the concept of "spatial genes" and its theoretical framework, termed it "a directional shift from universality to locality." Through analyzing diverse urban morphologies, he vividly illustrates methods for extracting spatial genes and interpreting urban spaces [26], providing practical approaches to avoid homogenization and achieve differentiated urban design. Long Hao and Xue Ke (2021) further elaborated on localized implementation logic within a globalized context, demonstrating how locality has evolved into a mature, actionable design methodology spanning physical sites, cultural contexts, construction techniques, and work practices [28].

Regarding localized construction practices, domestic scholars have conducted targeted theoretical research and practical applications by examining diverse architectural types and

regional contexts. In preserving distinctive villages and towns, Duan Jin et al. (2021) proposed shifting cognitive frameworks from "elements-types" to "regions-genes" to achieve authentic locality. Implementation strategies should center on "characteristic village regions," establishing comprehensive evaluation systems integrating heritage, landscapes, and industries, developing spatial gene-based planning frameworks, and emphasizing sustainable development beyond rigid preservation models [24]. Huang Ling and Yin Xuemei (2022) explored the interaction between children's outdoor activities and environments in mountainous urban neighborhoods, extending locality studies to adaptive architectural practices. They introduced the concept of "limited friendliness" for child-friendly environments and proposed three localized renewal approaches: rigid principles with flexible adaptations, rule-based interventions with contextual flexibility, and semi-planning strategies aligned with design and growth processes [30]. Liu Zhi and Zheng Zhi (2014) analyzed Xiamen University of Chinese Overseas' campus planning based on functional wetland concepts, elucidating localized construction principles through case studies[31]. He Yi et al. (2017) conducted a case study of Zoumatang Village in Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province, a typical kinship-based settlement. From the perspective of clan society, they analyzed the coupling relationship between clan structures and village spatial configurations to identify and preserve traditional village spatial frameworks and distinctive courtyard layouts. Using courtyard units as focal points, the research integrated conservation targets, restoration measures, and utilization strategies for traditional villages, offering innovative approaches for heritage preservation planning [32]. Liu Siqi and Yu Yi (2022) introduced spatial gene technology into urban renewal projects for Chengdu's Shaocheng Historic Cultural District. By examining the locality and continuity of spatial genes in modern Shaocheng development, they validated conditions for localized revitalization in historical districts and proposed nine targeted renewal strategies based on four spatial gene characteristics [33]. This work provides practical methodologies and exemplary models for localized urban renewal initiatives.

Table 1-2 Summary of Domestic Research on Building Locality Theory

Source: summarized by author based on reference

time	scholar	central idea
2013	Luo Shiwei	The differences and connections between regions and localities measured by time, described using the concept of 'locality'.
2013	Han Dongqing	Locality refers to a spatial attribute of architecture that requires keen attention to site-specific differences from other locations, while simultaneously reflecting unique cognitive processes and temporal progression during construction.
2014	Liu Yan, Zheng Zhi	Exploring Local Construction Based on Functional Wetlands
2017	He Yi et al.	From the Perspective of Clan Society: Providing New Perspectives and Methods for Traditional Village Conservation Planning
2019	Duan Jin et al.	The concept of "spatial genes" was proposed, advocating a technical system that encompasses spatial gene identification, extraction, analysis, evaluation, and inheritance guidance.
2021	Duan Jin et al.	The cognitive approach to characteristic towns and villages should shift from "element-type" to "region-genotype" for achieving "locality" transformation
2022	Huang Ling, Yin Xuemei	Mountain architecture adapts to local conditions through site-specific construction, adopting child-friendly renewal concepts with localized characteristics
2022	Liu Siqi, Yu Yi	Introducing spatial gene technology into urban renewal of historical and cultural districts in Chengdu's Shaocheng area

1.3.2 Current Research of Historic District Renovation

1.3.2.1 Review of International Studies on Historic District Renewal

(1) Early Phase

Research on the renewal and preservation of historic districts abroad originated from urban conservation efforts in the late 18th century. By the mid-19th century, after nearly a century of development, it gradually evolved into a scientific, systematic, and theoretical framework.

The early exploration phase spanning the early 20th century to the 1960s focused on preserving historical landscapes, with conservation efforts expanding from individual historic buildings to entire urban districts alongside the establishment of relevant legal frameworks.

Notable contributions include Camillo Sitte's critique of mechanical urban planning in *The Art of Building Cities*, where he emphasized the artistic value and place spirit of historic commercial districts [14], providing foundational ideas for comprehensive preservation. Jane Jacobs' analysis in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* challenged the destructive impact of large-scale urban renewal on commercial diversity, proposing that district vitality stems from mixed-use functions, compact street layouts, and pedestrian-friendly designs [15]. France's landmark 1962 *Marlow Law* pioneered the "historical conservation zone" concept, extending protection from individual structures to entire commercial districts' environments, marking the initial establishment of urban conservation systems.

(2) Deepening Development Stage

The 1970s to 1990s marked a phase of deepened development in urban conservation. This period transcended the limitations of pure preservation, focusing instead on balancing conservation efforts with commercial revitalization, which led to the formulation of core theories and practical models. Key research from this era includes Kenneth Frampton's seminal work *Towards Critical Regionalism: Six Points Against Architecture*, where he proposed critical regionalism theory advocating that commercial revitalization of historic districts should be rooted in local culture, resist global homogenization, and integrate regional characteristics with modern commercial functions[11]. Charles Jencks' *Postmodern Architectural Language* introduced adaptive reuse theory, emphasizing the preservation of historical buildings 'original character while adapting them for contemporary commercial use to achieve "new utilization of old spaces." In 1977, the Historic Preservation Foundation of America launched the "Main Street Strategy," promoting community-led incremental renewal through four dimensions — organization, economy, design, and promotion — providing replicable models for commercial district revitalization[16]. Christopher Alexander's *A Pattern Language* integrated commercial space with human behavior, stressing that neighborhood renewal should follow local natural and social patterns while avoiding mechanical standardized designs[13].

(3) Mature and Perfected Stage

Since the 21st century, urban heritage conservation has entered a mature and refined phase characterized by a focus on balancing diverse values, promoting inclusive renewal, addressing issues like excessive commercialization and gentrification, and revitalizing historic districts through adaptive reuse. Notable contributions include Steven Tiesdell's seminal work *Revitalizing Historic Urban Quarters* which systematically outlines principles for preserving commercial heritage districts while emphasizing mixed-use strategies and community

engagement[17]. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) further emphasized in its *Valletta Principles* that commercial heritage districts should be treated as dynamic living heritage assets, integrating cultural preservation, commercial vitality, and ecological sustainability[112]. Contemporary international research demonstrates interdisciplinary integration, heightened focus on social equity, and enhanced experiential design, offering valuable theoretical frameworks and practical insights for China's commercial heritage district revitalization efforts.

1.4.2.2 Review of Domestic Research on Historic District Renewal

(1) The Emergence of Conservation Concepts for Domestic Historic Districts

The protection of historical and cultural heritage in China initially focused on the preservation of cultural relics and buildings, later evolving into the conservation of historic and cultural cities. Subsequently, the scope expanded to include the protection of historical districts, ultimately forming a multi-tiered system for safeguarding historical and cultural heritage with an emphasis on designated historical and cultural protection zones.

In 1982, the State Council announced the first batch of National Historical and Cultural Cities, emphasizing the need to "take effective measures to strictly protect old urban areas that prominently reflect historical and cultural heritage." Although the concept of historical districts had not yet emerged during this period, attention was already being paid to the preservation of areas beyond cultural relics buildings. When the State Council released the second batch of National Historical and Cultural Cities in 1986, it formally introduced the concept of historical district protection in response to shortcomings in conservation efforts and the surge in urban renewal projects [116].

During the 1990s, China implemented a series of historical district conservation plans nationwide under the policy framework of heritage preservation and renewal. These initiatives produced numerous successful case studies that laid foundational practices for subsequent research in historic district preservation. In 1997, Pingyao's South Street completed infrastructure upgrades through underground utility systems and restoration of traditional stone-paved roads, while simultaneously guiding residents to revitalize street-side businesses, achieving coordinated development of historical preservation with cultural tourism and commercial activities. Lijiang Ancient Town utilized national special protection funds to renovate drainage and lighting systems, promoting systematic conservation while boosting local economic growth. Tunxi Old Street in Huangshan City adopted a "government-led infrastructure development + community-driven restoration" model, becoming a national

conservation pilot project and a core destination for Huangshan's cultural tourism. Ziyang Street in Linhai City implemented a "pilot-first, then expansion" approach, preserving street aesthetics through professional planning while serving as a cultural showcase window. Wuzhen Ancient Street in Tongxiang adhered to the "restoration as original" principle, restoring alleyways and architectural textures using authentic materials alongside municipal upgrades to fully recreate Jiangnan-style townscapes. Yangzhou's Dongguan Street ensured smooth conservation efforts through specialized management agencies and policy frameworks. Quanzhou's Zhongshan Road employed meticulous restoration techniques like "facade refurbishment and structural reinforcement," adopting a public-private partnership model to protect arcade architecture while revitalizing commercial vitality [35].

(2) Development of Conservation and Renewal Theory

Yang Jianqiang and Chen Yue (2020) reviewed China's urban renewal process spanning 70 years from 1949 to 2019, categorizing its development into four distinct phases: The first phase (1949-1977) focused on addressing historical deficiencies in basic living infrastructure, resolving prominent housing issues for urban workers, and simultaneously optimizing industrial layouts and structures through economic restructuring. The second phase (1978-1989) emphasized "urban renewal in old districts should adhere to principles of enhanced preservation, rational utilization, appropriate adjustments, and gradual transformation." The third phase (1990-2011) saw policy-driven urban renewal initiatives secured funding through formal institutional channels. The fourth phase (2012-present) has established urban renewal as an inevitable choice in the era of stock-based urban planning[52].

At the end of the 20th century, scholars proposed the need to protect buildings and districts of historical value, advocating for the establishment of a series of internationally applicable treaties and constitutions. During this period, various conservation and renewal theories emerged, including "organic renewal," "holistic protection," and "sustainable rehabilitation."

From the perspective of urban "preservation and development," Wu Liangyong proposed the concept of "organic renewal" in the early 1990s. During the renovation of Juer Hutong, he explained: To achieve relative integrity in the development of each district, the aggregation of numerous relatively complete elements can promote the overall environmental improvement of Beijing's old city, thereby realizing the goal of organic renewal. The holistic preservation theory advocates maintaining the dynamic integrity of historical district development, while the sustainable governance theory emphasizes conservation through remediation measures guided by sustainable development principles, establishing long-term protection concepts and

operational management mechanisms[51].

In the early 21st century, heritage conservation shifted from simple regulatory protection to emphasizing the functional revitalization and enhancement of historic districts. During this period, a series of dynamic sustainability renewal theories emerged, including "progressive renewal," "micro-renewal," and "urban catalysts."

Wu Lijia (2008) posited that small-scale renovation constitutes a fundamental approach to urban metabolism, functioning as a "bottom-up" transformation model that demonstrates remarkable flexibility in funding acquisition and planning design. "Diversity" is inherent to urban landscapes and historical districts alike, making incremental, localized renewal precisely aligned with the natural characteristics of historical areas [47].

After 2010, China's urbanization development entered a new phase. Under the context of existing built environments, the "micro-renovation" theory emerged in academic circles, with increasing attention being paid to its application in historical district renewal practices. Ma Hong and Ying Kongjin (2016) explained the shift in urban renewal concepts through the practice of community building in Shanghai, clarifying that the goal of community micro-renovation is to refine the quality of public spaces more precisely, ultimately achieving the purpose of community building [48]. Li Yanbo (2016) pointed out that urban spatial "micro-renovation" refers to a renewal model distinct from conventional urban construction approaches, occurring at a smaller scale compared to existing urban renewal models. It targets limited user groups, is easier to implement, and may involve lower costs and shorter cycles[49]. Wang Chenghua et al. (2017) argued that "micro-renovation" extends the concept of organic renewal, adopting a more micro-level perspective. This includes improvements in street spaces, utilization of node spaces, supplementation of public service facilities, and community environmental enhancements. It emphasizes respecting the inherent order and patterns of cities, problem-oriented approaches, and smaller scales with minimal intervention and broader participation. Such methods aim to improve built space quality while preserving place identity and locality, maintaining local residents' social networks, and properly balancing protection and development, present and future needs. On the basis of sustainable development, it explores urban renewal and transformation as a more profound and humane new model of urban transformation [50].

(3) Research on Conservation and Restoration Practices

Ruan Yisan and Gu Xiaowei (2004) conducted a systematic analysis of prominent conservation and renewal models in China's historic district preservation practices during the early 21st century, illustrating them through notable case studies: Fuzhou's "Three Lanes and

Seven Alleys" model focused on large-scale commercial development, Shanghai's "Xintiandi" approach of "preserving surface features while removing interior elements," Wuzhen's "restoring old structures authentically," and Beijing's "Nanchizi" model emphasizing courtyard-based self-renewal[38]. Based on these findings, the study proposed key strategies for historic district revitalization: strengthening government leadership and management functions, adhering to the principle of gradual small-scale "organic renewal," ensuring historical continuity and authenticity, and promoting community-driven land development mechanisms aligned with environmental protection requirements.

1.3.3 Current Research of Zhuangyuanfang District in Guangzhou

Current research literature on Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood remains limited, with existing studies primarily focusing on urban renewal strategies, morphological typology, and Guangzhou embroidery culture.

1.3.3.1 Study on Urban Renewal Strategy for Zhuangyuanfang

In urban renewal strategy research, Zhang Lei and Cai Taicheng (2010) first focused on Zhuangyuanfang District, analyzing its core advantages including cultural strengths, distinctive business formats, and urban location, while identifying key challenges in commercial revitalization such as cultural content deficiencies, lack of public spaces, inadequate fire safety and evacuation routes, and insufficient signage systems and environmental facilities [55]. Zhang Chunyang (2012), drawing from practical experiences in Zhuangyuanfang's renovation, proposed that the district's revitalization should prioritize preserving the spiritual essence of Guangzhou's historical districts while fostering diverse coexistence. Specific measures included maintaining traditional spatial layouts, preserving original architectural textures, offering flexible mixed-use models combining residential, commercial, and entertainment facilities, and creating compact, pedestrian-friendly communities with integrated functions [61]. Man Tang (2013) analyzed Zhuangyuanfang as a representative case of Guangzhou's Yuexiu Traditional Commercial District, examining its scale evolution during urban transformation and correlations with commercial district changes and historical contexts[107]. Ma Xinxin (2018), using Zhuangyuanfang as a case study, conducted in-depth analysis of traditional commercial streets, explored historical context, and summarized current challenges. He proposed a "One Approach, Three Elements" revitalization strategy for old urban commercial districts: autonomous renewal through collaborative operations, preservation of architectural textures, functional diversification, and cultural integration of industries[64]. Through field research, Luo Guoming (2019) conducted a

planning and design study of Zhuangyuanfang District from the perspective of revitalizing urban vitality, proposing renewal strategies including improving architectural quality, optimizing urban fabric, and upgrading commercial formats[60]. Zhang Zhanpeng and Zhou Jianyun (2020), examining traditional urban commercial spaces, analyzed case studies to summarize models for commercial space renewal. They identified key challenges in revitalizing Zhuangyuanfang's commercial environment and provided actionable recommendations[65].

1.3.3.2 Morphological Typology Study of Zhuangyuanfang

In the morphological typology study of Zhuangyuanfang, Deng Shushan (2017) employed Conzenian urban morphology analysis to examine the spatial morphological evolution of the Zhuangyuanfang district. The study divided the spatial transformation process into four stages, elucidated characteristic features of morphological changes at different phases, and analyzed underlying driving forces[56]. Zhu Zhilin and Tian Yinsheng (2022) developed a quantitative indicator system based on morphological regional elements, integrating spatial syntax for planar type quantification, GIS technology for graphic metric computation and visualization, and data mining methodologies. This approach was applied to identify spatial morphologies including planar types, architectural classifications, and land use patterns in Zhuangyuanfang[57]. Tian Yinsheng (2020) conducted classification and identification of "diseased bamboo tube houses" within the district, introduced a demolition-replication method for remediation, and proposed the concept of "new bamboo tube houses" along with design methodologies, expanding spatial morphology research to micro-level architectural unit analysis[66].

1.3.3.3 Research on Guangzhou Embroidery Culture at Zhuangyuanfang

In the study of Guangzhou embroidery culture at Zhuangyuanfang, Pan Fulin (1998) meticulously documented the historical evolution of this craft and its challenges amidst historical upheavals[62]. Jin Xiangfu (2012) analyzed the family-run theater costume workshops and their distinctive "front shop, back workshop" business model, revealing how the decline of Guangzhou embroidery culture and the struggles of Cantonese opera costume factories were reflected in the changing commercial landscape of urban development[63]. Gu Shujuan (2018) contextualized Zhuangyuanfang within the historical backdrop of Guangzhou's Thirteen Factories, tracing its rise and fall alongside the prosperity of Guangzhou embroidery in this era[58].

1.3.4 Review of Current Research

1.3.4.1 Summary of Existing Research Progress

(1) The locality theory has achieved interdisciplinary systematic construction and localized implementation

International research on locality has evolved through three core stages: the emergence of sociological concepts of "place," the theoretical refinement of human geography's "sense of place," and the maturation of architectural critical regionalism systems. This progression has established a comprehensive theoretical framework encompassing social relations, emotional culture, and spatial practices, clarifying locality's core essence as "resisting homogenization, anchoring local characteristics, and fostering emotional connections between people and spaces." These developments have provided foundational theoretical support for related studies. Since the formal introduction of the Chinese concept of "locality" in 2013, domestic research has rapidly advanced alongside urban renewal initiatives in China and transformed abstract locality concepts into actionable methodologies encompassing "identification extraction, analytical evaluation, and heritage guidance."

(2) Research on historic district renewal has established a comprehensive theoretical and practical framework spanning from preservation to revitalization.

Over a century of international research has evolved from the initial focus on preserving historical facades to establishing a mature framework that balances conservation with revitalization and integrates multiple values. This progress has yielded established theoretical models and practical approaches — including Main Street Strategies, adaptive reuse methodologies, and inclusive renewal frameworks—providing crucial references for China's related studies. Since the formal introduction of the historical district concept in the 1980s, domestic research has progressively developed a conservation and renewal theory system tailored to China's national conditions. Research perspectives have expanded from singular spatial modifications to encompass cultural preservation, business activation, and community symbiosis, accumulating substantial practical experience for commercial historical district renewal studies.

(3) The research on Zhuangyuanfang has completed the basic framework organization and preliminary problem diagnosis.

Existing research on Zhuangyuanfang has established three core research directions. In urban renewal strategy studies, scholars have preliminarily summarized the neighborhood's developmental advantages and existing challenges, while exploring fundamental approaches

and macro-level directions for revitalization. Regarding morphological typology research, scholars have clarified the evolutionary trajectory and underlying drivers of spatial morphology based on the Conzenian School theory, extending to micro-level analysis of bamboo tube house architectural units, thereby providing crucial methodological support for spatial analysis in this study. Cultural research has systematically examined the historical development and inheritance challenges of Zhuangyuanfang's Guangzhou embroidery and theatrical costume craftsmanship, uncovering the neighborhood's core cultural essence. These research findings have laid a solid foundation for field investigations and current situation assessments in this study.

1.3.4.2 Remaining Gaps in Research

(1) There are significant shortcomings in the research on the compatibility between locality theory and commercial-type historical district renewal.

Current locality research favors architectural design and rural preservation but lacks systematic adaptation for commercial historic districts. Most studies remain at a conceptual or symbolic level, failing to define the core logic and evaluation criteria needed for this unique category. This theoretical gap results in "superficial cultural branding" rather than a guiding framework for the entire revitalization process.

(2) Insufficient research on systematic renewal strategy systems for commercial historical districts guided by local characteristics

Current research on historic districts often focuses on isolated dimensions like space or commerce, lacking a localized, multidimensional framework that integrates space, culture, economy, society, and ecology. For "warehouse-dominant" districts like Zhuangyuanfang, existing studies fail to address cultural disconnection and vitality loss. This results in a lack of systematic strategies that balance preservation, revitalization, and community symbiosis, leaving practitioners with only generalized, non-replicable recommendations.

(3) There is a gap in in-depth localized research and full-process empirical application of the Zhuangyuanfang district in Guangzhou.

Current research on Zhuangyuanfang primarily focuses on typological analysis of spatial morphology, preliminary summaries of existing issues, and discussions on macro-level renewal strategies. However, it lacks systematic comprehensive analyses from a place-based perspective regarding neighborhood spatial texture, historical context, original business formats, social networks, and ecological foundations. Moreover, most existing studies remain at the strategic level, failing to deeply integrate renewal theories with practical site conditions.

They lack empirical research spanning theoretical frameworks, strategic systems, overall design, and implementation of key nodes. Additionally, there is insufficient validation of the operability and effectiveness of place-based renewal strategies through actionable design solutions, resulting in research findings that cannot directly support the actual renovation and transformation efforts in Zhuangyuanfang district.

1.4 Research Subjects

1.4.1 Historic District

The concept of 'Historic Urban Areas' originated from the 1987 *Washington Charter*, defined as 'areas of any size encompassing towns, historic sites, and human settlements, along with their natural and built environments.'

In China, the precursor to the concept of "historic districts" was the "Historical and Cultural Protection Zones" proposed by the State Council in 1986. In 1994, the Ministry of Construction and the National Cultural Heritage Administration formally defined the term "historical districts" in the *Compilation Requirements for Protection Plans of Historic and Cultural Cities*, incorporating them into the scope of historic city preservation. Designated historical districts must be approved by local governments and officially announced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the National Cultural Heritage Administration. These districts are characterized by abundant cultural relics and historical architecture, along with a defined scale[116]. Historic districts typically possess richer historical resources and are subject to more stringent legal regulations regarding preservation and renewal.

1.4.2 Commercial Historic Districts

The "commercial-type historical district" examined in this study specifically refers to historic neighborhoods primarily functioning as commercial hubs. These districts may either originate as cultural-commercial complexes rooted in historical heritage or evolve from traditional wholesale trade zones shaped by urbanization. The Zhuangyuanfang District, serving as the primary research subject, exemplifies the latter category. While situated within a historically-cultural district with established cultural foundations, its traditional commercial character has gradually transitioned into the predominant economic activity as the historical ambiance diminished over prolonged urban development processes.

1.4.3 Zhuangyuanfang District, Guangzhou

Zhuangyuanfang is a traditional commercial district located in Renmin Street, Yuexiu

District, Guangzhou City, which originated during the Ming Dynasty and experienced multiple periods of commercial prosperity throughout history. However, with the urban evolution of Guangzhou, the current Zhuangyuanfang has transformed into a wholesale trade market dominated by low-end business formats.

1.5 Research Methods and Research Framework

1.5.1 Research Methods

(1) Literature review method

Through online platforms, libraries, and other channels, we conducted in-depth research on professional publications, journal articles, and related literature to analyze theoretical achievements pertaining to locality-related concepts and practical outcomes in commercial historical district revitalization. This study establishes a comprehensive theoretical framework to provide foundational support for subsequent studies. Additionally, by examining relevant planning documents, we gained insights into how higher-level urban planning directives guided the urban renewal of Guangzhou Zhuangyuanfang and its surrounding areas, as well as the evolution of commercial spaces. These findings lay the groundwork for the empirical research presented in this paper.

(2) Case Analysis Method

By comparing domestic and international case studies, this study identifies similarities and differences between Zhuangyuanfang Historical and Cultural District and related examples across multiple dimensions including physical space, cultural heritage, and existing challenges. Drawing on urban renewal cases within comparable cultural contexts and incorporating a place-based perspective, it analyzes the distinctive local characteristics of Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood and proposes revitalization strategies tailored for this commercial historical district.

(3) Field research method

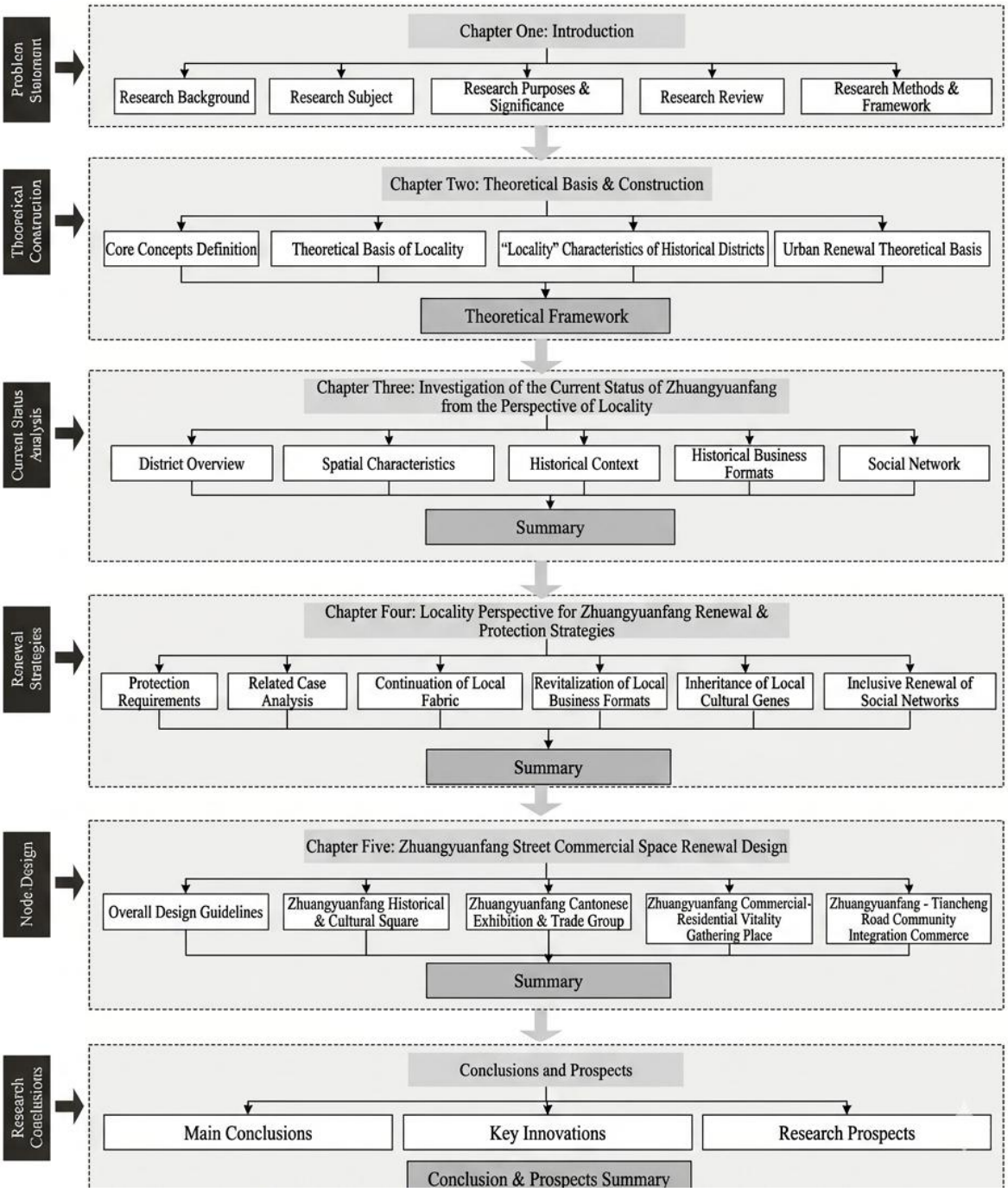
This study conducts field research on the Zhuangyuanfang Historical and Cultural District as its research subject. Through on-site surveys, we directly perceive its spatial environment by visiting all streets, alleys, and connecting roads within the area. The research clarifies connectivity patterns between different levels of streets and alleys, explores potential spatial configurations, examines the district's historical and cultural attributes, and identifies current challenges hindering commercial development. These findings provide a solid research foundation for design practices.

（4）Mapping Analysis Method

Mapping diagrams serve as graphical representations for visualizing geographic information, spatial data, or other types of data. They facilitate the analysis of site characteristics, historical development, environmental factors, and are commonly employed in architecture, urban planning, and landscape design. The types and content of mapping diagrams vary depending on project scale and objectives. This study utilizes mapping diagram analysis methods to examine the current status of Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood.

1.5.2 Research Framework

The research framework centers on "local context" to systematically outline renewal pathways for Guangzhou's Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood, following a progressive approach from macro-level theory to micro-level design. It begins by defining research background and objectives, establishing theoretical foundations through clarifying the essence of "local context" and organizing renewal principles. Subsequent empirical research analyzes the neighborhood's spatial characteristics, historical context, and social networks to capture its cultural essence and current challenges. Based on field investigations, theoretical insights are translated into concrete renewal strategies that emphasize preserving spatial texture while enhancing social inclusivity through cultural preservation and business revitalization. Critical implementation points in the design phase undergo practical validation to achieve closed-loop implementation from guidelines to execution. The study concludes with research findings and future trend projections. This framework demonstrates rigorous academic rigor and practical orientation through its cyclical process of "theory-research-strategy-practice."



Source: Author

Figure 1-3 Research Framework Diagram

Chapter 2 Theoretical Foundations and Framework Development

2.1 Definition of Core Concepts

2.1.1 Locality

The term "locality" originated in cultural geography and is widely used in literature and art to discuss topics related to "local knowledge," "foreign cultures," and "communities." In contrast to "globality," locality reflects an object's adaptability to its specific context. In architecture, the most straightforward meaning of "locality" refers to the close relationship between a building and its physical location or regional environment.

2.1.2 Historic District

Historic districts are designated by the people's government and announced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development and the National Cultural Heritage Administration, featuring abundant cultural relics and historical buildings within a certain scale. These blocks typically possess richer historical resources, and their preservation and renewal are subject to more stringent legal and regulatory constraints.

The "commercial-type historical district" studied in this paper specifically refers to historic neighborhoods primarily functioning as commercial hubs. These districts may either originate as cultural-historical commercial zones rooted in historical heritage or evolve into traditional wholesale commercial areas through urbanization processes. Specifically, they comprise the core commercial street spaces within historical districts along with adjacent street-facing buildings, exhibiting two defining characteristics: firstly, they serve as functional thoroughfares through their street configuration; secondly, they integrate multiple functions including commerce, culture, and residential use within a unified district framework.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation Research on "Locality"

The term "locality" has been widely adopted across multiple academic disciplines, carrying multifaceted meanings and relative interpretations. In architectural practice and theory, the field of architecture and its design branches recognize it as a fundamental attribute at the core level. Within contemporary social contexts, studying "locality" design issues requires theoretical depth and practical research as foundational conditions to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework. This framework enables in-depth exploration and systematic analysis of challenges related to the scope, participants, and implementation phases of locality-based design approaches.

2.2.1 Origin of the "Locality" Theory

The concept of local identity was initially proposed as a counterpoint to globalization. In China, it was Taiwanese architects who first recognized its importance in architectural planning, subsequently focusing on the integration of local culture into building design.

The practical origins of the theory of locality can be traced back to the traditional rural construction period in China. Complete and long-term localized construction was the core building model at that time, with an integrated construction system led by craftsmen embodying the indigenous logic of regional spatial design, representing the earliest practical form of the concept of locality. With the continuous refinement of social division of labor during the process of social civilization, this holistic localized practice gradually disintegrated, and the integrated construction led by craftsmen became marginalized, causing the original localized construction model to exit the mainstream. In the 1980s, modernist architectural trends spread widely worldwide, and the architectural community on the Chinese mainland primarily focused on contemporary development issues related to Chinese architecture, with relatively insufficient research and attention paid to the locality of architecture in Taiwan, China. After the policy of entry permits for mainland scholars to Taiwan was liberalized, mainland scholars conducted academic exchanges and field research in Taiwan, bridging the practical level for introducing the concept of locality into the architectural community on the Chinese mainland. The 4th issue of 2011 and the 4th issue of 2014 of the Journal of Architecture successively published full-length special topics on contemporary architecture in Taiwan. The 1st issue of 2014 of New Architecture, themed "Localized Construction," systematically elucidated the localized practices in Taiwan, China, marking the formal introduction of the concept of "locality" into the architectural community on the Chinese mainland[21]. Subsequently, scholars such as Shan Jun, Wang Lu, and Zhou Rong from Tsinghua University conducted research and academic discussions related to locality, continuously promoting the dissemination of the concept and deepening theoretical understanding, which rapidly sparked a research boom on the theory of locality in the academic community on the Chinese mainland, laying the core academic foundation for the study of localized architectural theory and urban renewal practices.

2.2.2 "Locality" and Urban Morphology Typology Research

2.2.2.1 Morphological Typology

Morphology centers on spatial analysis, integrating methodologies from architecture, urban planning, environmental psychology, sociology, geography, and history to uncover

patterns in spatial configurations. By examining both internal coherence and external variations, it categorizes spatial forms into distinct types, thereby generating systematic research outcomes in spatial studies.

Morphotype typology provides material spatial prototypes for place identity. Centered on the Conzenian School and Muratoni-Cagnia School, morphotype studies employ urban plan analysis, architectural typology classification, and spatial texture analysis to identify stable material spatial forms across regions — including street patterns, courtyard organization, urban-water relationships, and block scales. These morphological features serve as tangible carriers of long-term sedimentation from regional natural environments and historical-cultural contexts, constituting the most intuitive spatial expressions of place identity and representing the first step in identifying regional characteristics[56].

Morphotype theory integrates morphology and typology, utilizing the analytical and conceptual framework of urban morphology to understand structural characteristics of urban forms, while incorporating evolutionary perspectives from typological studies to examine the logical relationships governing their formation and transformation. Spanning multiple disciplines, this approach synthesizes fragmented morphological logic to address real-world urban construction phenomena. It aims to establish cognitive diagrams based on "morphotype units," thereby chronologically explaining the historical evolution of urban spaces. For urban designers and architects, identifying morphotype types enables their translation into design languages, demonstrating significant practical value in professional practice.

2.2.2.2 Spacel Gene

Space genes refer to unique and relatively stable spatial configuration patterns formed through the interaction between urban space, natural environment, and historical culture. These patterns are both the product of long-term mutual adaptation and evolution among urban space, natural environment, and historical culture, carrying distinctive regional information that defines urban identity, and serve to maintain harmonious relationships among these three elements[26].

The concept of "gene" originates from biology, referring to the fundamental unit of heredity in organisms. Biological genes are not only the result of natural selection during evolution but also store complete information governing life processes such as conception, growth, and apoptosis, enabling precise and stable inheritance of biological traits through replication. Certain urban spatial elements — including axes, waterfront spaces, streets, and courtyards — exhibit distinct structural, textural, and sequential characteristics across different

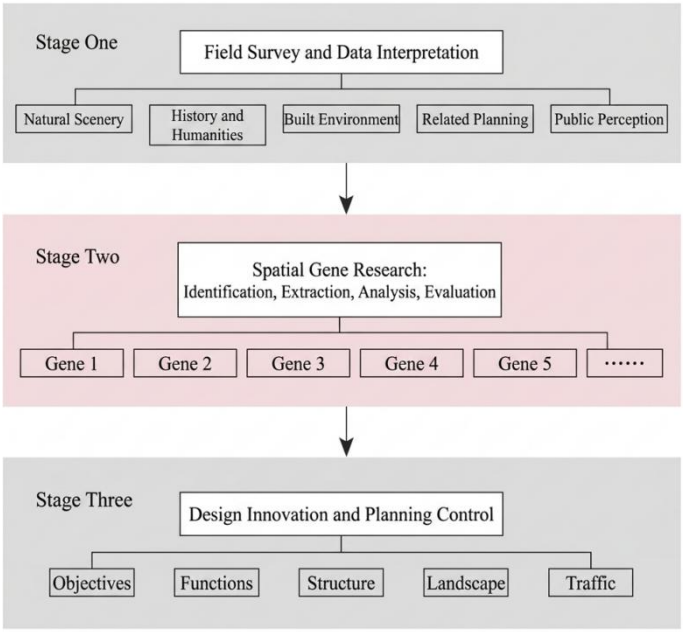
regional cultural zones. These characteristic spatial configurations reflect both historical selection processes that demonstrate harmonious coexistence with local natural environments and adaptation to regional human activities, while serving as foundational mechanisms for preserving these relationships and features. Analogous to how biological genes influence organismal traits, spatial genes shape the morphological evolution and development of cities.

Spatial gene theory offers a three-phase planning methodology:

Phase I: Identification & Extraction. Combining traditional surveys with big data and AI to extract essential spatial patterns;

Phase II: Analysis & Evaluation. Using structural and network analysis to quantify the causal links between gene structures and regional morphology;

Phase III: Preservation & Guidance. Moving beyond element-based control to treat spatial genes as holistic objectives, ensuring the targeted protection and enhancement of genetic heritage[26].



Source: Literature [26]

Figure 2-1 Space Gene Theory in Local Design Method

2.2.3 "Locality" and Local Construction

With the acceleration of social development, technological progress, and globalization, information is now instantly shared worldwide. Materials and technologies are no longer constrained by geographical factors, construction techniques have become increasingly standardized, and similar human needs across the globe are reflected in comparable spatial forms. Architects and the construction industry no longer serve only their local communities.

Against this backdrop, the expression of regional natural, social, and cultural uniqueness has emerged as what architectural theorists call "local construction," gradually gaining widespread attention.

Site-specific construction refers to adaptive design and building methods that align with a site's natural environment, historical context, urban fabric, and users' spiritual needs under given conditions. This theory rejects universal architectural language and standardized construction models, advocating instead for a project-specific approach rooted in its unique "here and now." By deeply addressing site-specific factors — including climate, resources, traditions, construction techniques, cost considerations, and community needs — it establishes intrinsic connections between architecture and its environment, ensuring buildings truly take root in their physical context[34].

2.3 Theoretical Foundation Research on Urban Renewal

2.3.1 Organic Renewal Theory

The Organic Renewal Theory was proposed by Wu Liangyong based on summarizing advanced international urban renewal theories and practical experiences gained from multiple urban planning projects such as Beijing's Shichahai and Juer Hutong. From the perspective of "preservation and development" in urban planning, Wu introduced the concept of "organic renewal" in the early 1990s. During the renovation of Juer Hutong, he explained: To achieve relative completeness in the development of each district, the aggregation of numerous relatively intact elements can promote overall environmental improvement in Beijing's old city, thereby realizing the goal of organic renewal. The core idea is that cities form an organic whole. Urban renewal should follow structural order and developmental patterns, employing small-scale, incremental, and targeted restoration methods to manage relationships between internal components and reconcile past-present dynamics. This approach ensures each urban district achieves relative perfection, ultimately achieving comprehensive urban renewal[51].

The basic principles of organic renewal emphasize the "holistic nature", "gradual progression", "continuity", and "spontaneity" of renewal.

The concept of "holistic approach" emphasizes treating renewal projects as integrated systems rather than isolated entities. In urban renewal initiatives, it is essential to adhere to the existing urban order and its inherent principles, ensuring the integrity of the renovation project and its surrounding urban spatial configurations. This approach promotes rational development and achieves harmonious unity across the entire ecosystem.

Unlike the extensive renovation model characterized by frequent demolition and rapid

results, organic renewal emphasizes adopting small-scale, incremental approaches to address urban challenges through tailored solutions.

The concept of "continuity" emphasizes that each urban plot possesses its own local cultural characteristics and historical heritage, with urban landscapes and spatial configurations serving as external manifestations of a city's historical culture and spiritual civilization. Organic renewal goes beyond merely preserving the physical aspects of urban landscapes; it is more crucial to sustain the cultural essence of a city, including its humanistic traditions and historical customs at the spiritual level.

The term "spontaneous" emphasizes public participation, where citizens engage in bottom-up participatory urban renewal initiatives. During the urban renewal process, governments should recognize that the public constitutes the primary users of urban spaces. Consequently, renovation efforts must address the tangible needs and spatial perceptions of residents.

2.3.2 Micro-Renewal Theory

"Micro-renewal" represents an extension of organic renewal concepts, adopting a more localized approach through initiatives such as street space enhancement, node space utilization, public service facility expansion, and community environment improvement. This methodology emphasizes respecting urban inherent order and patterns, addressing issues through smaller-scale interventions with limited physical disruption and broad community participation. By elevating built environment quality while preserving place identity and regional characteristics, it maintains local residents' social networks and balances protection and development needs, reconciling present and future considerations. Grounded in sustainable development principles, this approach explores urban renewal strategies as a more profound and human-centered urban transformation model (Figure 2-2)[50]. The core philosophy of micro-renewal exhibits the following characteristics:

Greater emphasis is placed on preserving existing contextual continuity. The micro-renewal model prioritizes respecting the inherent characteristics of a region, such as ecological foundations, cultural contexts, community structures, and local lifestyles, while minimizing interventions and implementing restoration where feasible to maintain the original contextual patterns, spatial textures, and place spirit of the area.

The catalytic role of activation mechanisms is emphasized. During urban renewal processes, initial redevelopment zones may emerge as catalyst points, subsequently influencing surrounding land transformations and creating ripple effects that expand from

localized initiatives to broader areas. The micro-renewal approach prioritizes stimulating renewal momentum by identifying key catalyst elements that can drive subsequent upgrades. Through small-scale, incremental implementation strategies, this methodology facilitates continuous refinement and development of urban structures.

Emphasizing bottom-up endogenous momentum. Compared to urban renewal driven by external interventions, the micro-renewal concept places greater emphasis on market-driven and resident-oriented renewal needs, as well as complex stakeholder interests. It highlights bottom-up economic vitality and renewal dynamics, including community-led development models and broader public participation, aiming to stimulate voluntary awareness within communities and society, thereby establishing autonomous renewal mechanisms.

Emphasizing spatial implementation and sustainable outcomes, the traditional urban planning model prioritizes one-time completion, while the micro-renovation approach advocates for a progressive, incremental strategy that achieves significant results through small-scale successes. This sustainable model demonstrates strong flexibility, adaptability, and temporal continuity. Consequently, micro-renovation emphasizes concrete spatial execution, focuses on actionable plans, and dynamically adjusts strategies in response to environmental changes to ensure sustainable urban renewal development.



Source: Literature[50]

Figure 2-2 Conceptual diagram of micro-renewal

2.4 Study on Local Characteristics of Commercial Historic Districts

2.4.1 Historical Context

2.4.1.1 Geographical Environment

The natural geography and ecological foundation of historical districts refers to the native geographical conditions and ecosystem structures within a specific geographic area that nurture and sustain the formation, development, and organic evolution of these districts. It also encompasses the ecological wisdom developed by indigenous communities through long-term human-land interactions, along with symbiotic models adapted to regional natural characteristics.

It constitutes the fundamental essence of local characteristics in historical districts, fundamentally determining their site selection, spatial configuration, architectural forms, construction techniques, lifestyle patterns, and cultural traits. Serving as the core natural identifier distinguishing them from other regional historical districts, it also represents essential rigid constraints that must be respected during conservation and renewal efforts. This foundational element provides the natural basis for achieving sustainable revitalization while preventing uniformity across districts.

(1) Macro-regional geographical pattern

The large-scale mountain-water landscape, geographical units, and watershed environment where historical districts are situated determine their urban positioning, functional attributes, and developmental trajectory, serving as the core geographical foundation for their millennium-long existence. Key elements including the district's topographical classification (plain/mountain/water town/coastal area), watershed hydrological patterns, mountain-water-city relationships, and regional transportation geography directly shape the origin and developmental direction of these districts.

(2) Mesoscale Site Microrelief and Hydrological Conditions

These refined geographical elements — including micro-terrain, elevation gradients, hydrological cycles, and drainage conditions within the neighborhood and surrounding areas—directly determine the street alignment, architectural layout, spatial scale, and disaster prevention logic of the district. Key factors such as natural slope orientation, historical water system remnants, groundwater levels, natural drainage patterns, and flood risk zones serve as the fundamental geographical basis for creating localized urban spaces.

(3) Microscopic indigenous natural resources

The natural elements of a neighborhood — including local building materials, native

vegetation, and regional resources — directly shape its indigenous construction systems, architectural styles, and lifestyle patterns, serving as the most tangible foundation for architectural localization. These elements encompass locally sourced building materials (such as stone, wood, clay, and gravel), climate-adapted vegetation communities, and regional agricultural products. Together, they form the material basis for developing authentic construction techniques and sustainable business models characteristic of the area.

2.4.1.2 Intangible Cultural Heritage and Folk Culture

(1) Intangible Cultural Heritage

Intangible cultural heritage, as a legally recognized cultural concept explicitly defined by UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage and China's Law of the People's Republic of China on Intangible Cultural Heritage, refers to various traditional cultural expressions passed down through generations by ethnic groups as integral components of their cultural heritage, along with associated physical objects and sites. At its core, it represents living cultural traditions transmitted through human carriers via oral instruction and practical inheritance, distinguishing itself from static material cultural heritage such as ancient architecture and artifacts.

In China's statutory protection system, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) is categorized into a four-tier catalog system at national, provincial, municipal, and district (county) levels. This system includes the recognition of representative inheritors, the establishment of protection and inheritance bases, and adheres to stringent certification standards, statutory protection requirements, and an official management framework[116].

Considering the local characteristics of China's intangible cultural heritage protection system and historical districts, intangible cultural heritage can be categorized into six core categories: traditional oral literature and its linguistic carriers; traditional arts including painting, calligraphy, music, dance, drama, storytelling performances, and acrobatics; traditional crafts, medicine, and calendrical systems; traditional rituals, festivals, and other folk customs; as well as traditional sports, recreational activities, and other forms of intangible cultural heritage.

(2) Folk Culture

Folk culture, also known as folk custom culture, refers to the collective lifestyle and behavioral patterns formed by social groups in specific regions through long-term production and living practices, passed down through generations and collectively adhered to. It embodies the collective psychology, values, daily habits, and ethical norms of regional

communities, permeating every aspect of people's lives—from clothing, food, and housing to weddings, funerals, seasonal celebrations, folk beliefs, and neighborhood interactions. As the most extensive and vibrant foundational carrier of regional folk culture, it serves as the living manifestation of local traditions.

The core of folk culture lies in "spontaneous creation by the people, collective inheritance, and daily practice." It is not officially recognized as cultural heritage but rather a living culture deeply rooted in the daily lives of the public, representing the most authentic and widespread expression of regional locality.

Combined with the local characteristics of historical districts, folk culture can be mainly divided into four core categories: material folklore, social folklore, spiritual folklore, and linguistic folklore.

2.4.1.2 Collective Memory

Collective memory permeates the entire history of human civilization and humanity's environmental transformation, emerging as an unconscious product of human evolution. Throughout each developmental stage, humans continuously reshape collective memory, which serves as cultural and material genetic material inherited through civilization's progression. Spanning human history, this collective memory indirectly shapes physical environments, thereby maintaining stable development patterns in both ecological systems and urban landscapes.

From an architectural perspective, the collective memory of historic districts emerges from shared perceptions, emotional attachments, and collective narratives formed by specific social groups (original residents, local merchants, urban citizens, etc.) through long-term interactions involving daily life, production activities, and social exchanges within these areas. This cultural heritage manifests as a dynamic system that materializes through architectural elements such as physical structures, spatial configurations, landmark nodes, and physical environments, while achieving tangible preservation, spatial representation, and intergenerational transmission.

2.4.2 Distinctive Business

2.4.2.1 Continuation of Native Business Models

Indigenous business formats represent the organic commercial DNA of a district, distinguishing authentic historical areas from "imitation" antique streets. Considering the developmental characteristics of historical districts in China, particularly the distinctive features of Guangfu commercial districts in Lingnan, the original business formats can be

categorized into four core types:

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) skill-based indigenous business formats. These constitute the core and foundation of commercial historical district indigenous business formats, referring to industries that co-develop with the district and rely on local ICH skills and traditional handicrafts. They also serve as the primary source of cultural identity recognition for the district.

Native commercial formats rooted in local culture. These retail and business models naturally emerged alongside neighborhood commerce development, seamlessly integrating with the spatial characteristics of urban districts. They serve as the cornerstone of commercial vitality and a direct reflection of the commercial heritage within these areas. Unlike traditional commercial formats with long-standing historical continuity, these locally developed models have relatively short histories and exhibit fundamental features of modern commercial practices.

Street-level lifestyle-oriented primary business formats. These are convenience-oriented service formats serving local communities within and around the neighborhood, representing the core manifestation of the "residential-commercial symbiosis" attribute of the district. They also constitute the fundamental source of the neighborhood's vibrant street atmosphere and serve as a key distinguishing feature from purely scenic area-oriented districts.

Folk service-oriented indigenous business model. This is a complementary service industry deeply integrated with regional folk culture and local living customs, serving as a tangible manifestation of regional folk culture in the commercial domain and an important carrier of collective memory within urban neighborhoods.

2.4.2.2 Indigenous Business Model

The business model for historical districts refers to a comprehensive organizational framework and operational system designed under the rigid baseline constraints of historical preservation. It systematically addresses multiple objectives including cultural heritage preservation, commercial revitalization, community coexistence, and sustainable development. This model encompasses holistic planning for business format cultivation, spatial operations, revenue distribution, stakeholder responsibilities, brand building, and long-term governance within the district.

This framework establishes fundamental conceptual boundaries and logical distinctions from the original business model: The original model addresses the question of "what to operate in the neighborhood," focusing on core business content, product categories, and

commercial infrastructure—the essential foundation of neighborhood commerce. In contrast, the operational model tackles "how to manage the neighborhood, who should manage it, and how to achieve sustainable operations," emphasizing the underlying logic of commercial operations, organizational structures, and management systems — the methodology for integrating commercial activities with cultural preservation, community engagement, and heritage conservation goals. The original business model serves as the core service focus and content foundation for the operational model, while the operational model provides institutional safeguards ensuring the original model's dynamic sustainability, adaptive evolution, and preservation. Together, these two components form a comprehensive system for revitalizing commercial activities in historic neighborhoods.

2.4.3 Spatial Form

2.4.3.1 District Axis

The axis emerges through centuries of organic growth and historical evolution in historic districts, shaped by regional natural foundations, historical context, commercial logic, and local lifestyles. It serves as a core linear spatial framework that governs the overall spatial layout of the district, connects key focal points, carries the narrative of local cultural heritage, and anchors the spiritual essence of neighborhood spaces.

It constitutes the "primary artery" of the historic district's street layout. Unlike the top-down functional axes in modern urban planning that emphasize geometric symmetry and ceremonial aesthetics, this spatial core emerges organically from the ground up, deeply rooted in the district's local characteristics. Serving as the fundamental anchor and foundational framework, it guides architectural practices in place-making, cultural heritage preservation, spatial storytelling, and revitalization design for historical districts.

2.4.3.2 Street Pattern

The street layout of historical districts represents an integrated spatial order and physical morphology system that has evolved organically over centuries, with alleyways forming its core framework. This structure comprises network topology, spatial hierarchy, scale proportions, interface characteristics, and node systems. Serving as both the foundational physical skeleton of historical districts and a tangible embodiment of regional planning wisdom, architectural culture, social life, and historical continuity, it constitutes essential local elements in preservation and renewal efforts. Distinct from modern standardized urban road networks, this architectural essence determines the unique identity and spatial distinctiveness of historic districts.

(1) Topological structure of street-texture

Topological structure serves as the foundational framework of street patterns, encompassing interconnections between alleys, their spatial trajectories, and overall layout configurations. This element represents the most stable and historically authentic component of historic districts developed over centuries, and constitutes the core subject of study in Kang Ze 'en's urban morphology framework regarding "urban planar configurations."

From a spatial layout perspective, the street topology of historic districts differs from the standardized grid networks typical of modern cities. Instead, it represents a distinctive pattern organically developed through regional geography, commercial demands, and lifestyle characteristics. Common configurations include: the fishbone-shaped layout characteristic of Cantonese commercial districts(Figure 2-3); the parallel river-street belt structure found in Jiangnan water town areas; the grid-based courtyard-style layout prevalent in northern historical districts; and the free terraced layout typical of mountainous urban areas.



Source: based on planning materials, furthered by author

Figure 2-3 Fishbone-like street texture of Nantou Ancient City

(2) Hierarchical System and Functional Sequence of Street and Alley Spaces

The street layout of historical districts is not merely a homogeneous collection of roads, but rather a hierarchical spatial sequence that aligns precisely with functional requirements, privacy levels, and pedestrian behavior patterns. This structure reflects a progressive transition from urban public spaces to semi-public neighborhood areas, and ultimately to private courtyard spaces, forming the core logic of the district's spatial narrative. Based on the

characteristics of historical districts, their street hierarchy can typically be divided into four levels, each corresponding to distinct architectural spatial design principles and functional orientations.

Urban-level connecting streets and alleys: predominantly consisting of primary and secondary urban arterial roads surrounding neighborhoods, they serve as the interface between urban areas and residential blocks, undertaking the core function of pedestrian flow diversion. These spaces exhibit the largest scale and highest degree of public accessibility.

The main street of a neighborhood serves as its core framework and commercial artery, undertaking primary functions such as commerce, pedestrian flow, and cultural display. It constitutes the dominant spatial sequence within the neighborhood, with spatial scale and public accessibility being secondary considerations.

Side streets/branch alleys: Extending perpendicular to the main street, they connect the main street with residential clusters, serving as transitional spaces between commercial and residential functions. These areas combine convenience-oriented commerce and neighborhood interaction, featuring further reduced spatial scale, diminished publicness, and enhanced livability.

Lifang Group Road / End Alley: Running deep within residential clusters, these are predominantly narrow alleys and end lanes serving only daily pedestrian traffic. They act as a transitional zone between private living spaces and semi-public street areas, featuring the narrowest scale and highest level of privacy.

(3) Street and alley dimensions

The scale and proportion of streets and alleys constitute one of the core elements in urban layout design, directly determining spatial enclosure, ambiance, and human perception experiences. This aspect also epitomizes regional planning wisdom. The primary control indicator is the ratio of street width (D) to building height (H) on both sides (D/H)[4], a concept systematically elaborated by Yoshinobu Ashihara in *External Space Design.* This metric serves as the fundamental quantitative measure for historical street spaces' distinctive characteristics.

Beyond the D/H ratio, variations in alleyway width, length, and spatial rhythm constitute essential elements of urban street patterns. Traditional historic alleys rarely feature uniform spaces with uniform widths over extended distances. Instead, they employ alternating widths and dynamic spatial configurations to create a "rise-advance-turn-convolution" spatial rhythm. This rhythmic design, combined with strategically placed nodes that expand and contract, generates layered spatial experiences — a defining characteristic that sets them apart from

modern urban road designs characterized by standardized layouts.

(4) Interface morphology and construction characteristics of streets and alleys

The street interface serves as the "surface layer" of urban street layouts, encompassing the bottom, side, and top surfaces that enclose street spaces. It represents the most direct manifestation of regional architectural culture and traditional construction techniques, and constitutes the core focus for street appearance regulation from an architectural perspective.

The ground surface layer, which refers to the pavement covering streets and alleys, forms the foundation of urban street layouts. Traditional ground surfaces in historic districts predominantly utilize local materials — such as granite paving in Cantonese-style neighborhoods and bluestone slabs in Jiangnan-style districts. These materials not only adapt to regional climates and functional requirements but also create distinctive spatial textures and historical traces. The paving texture, construction methods, and material selection constitute essential components of the local characteristics inherent in street layouts.

The lateral facade, comprising the architectural facades lining streets and alleys, serves as the core element of urban interfaces. In historical districts, these facades are not isolated structures but form a cohesive, unified, and rhythmic architectural ensemble. Examples include the continuous colonnade facades of Lingnan arcade streets, the narrow-bay continuous facades of bamboo tube house blocks, and the solid wall-residence gate interfaces characteristic of northern courtyard neighborhoods. The proportions of doors and windows, eave detailing, material colors, and decorative elements all adhere to regional architectural principles, creating a unified visual hierarchy and distinctive regional identity. In commercial historical districts, the "virtual-real relationship" between storefront windows and solid walls within lateral facades, along with the transparency of ground-floor interfaces, directly determines the commercial vitality and spatial ambiance of the streets.

The top interface refers to the upper spatial boundary of streets and alleys, encompassing arcade canopies, eaves lines of adjacent buildings, tree canopies above the roadway, and overpass structures. It serves as a crucial element that enhances the enclosed spatial perception of urban areas.

(5) Junction System and Spatial Punctuation of Streets and Alleys

Street junctions serve as pivotal nodes in urban street patterns, where spatial dimensions, functions, and forms undergo transformations. Functioning as the "punctuation marks" in street spatial sequences, they facilitate pedestrian flow distribution, functional transitions, cultural displays, and neighborhood interactions. These junctions also constitute the core element in architectural practice for creating street environments.

Typical nodes in the street layout of historical districts include main entrances, intersections, small squares/pocket parks, memorial archways, ancient bridges, wells, ancient trees, and spaces in front of significant historical buildings. These nodes are not isolated but deeply integrated into the street network. Through spatial expansion, contraction, and transitions, they create climactic moments and pauses within the street spatial sequence, while simultaneously preserving the district's historical continuity and collective memory.

2.4.3.3 Courtyard Organization

In architectural design, courtyard spaces (Figure 2-4a, b) primarily represent a distinct organizational pattern formed through spatial enclosure, characterized by clearly defined boundaries. When examined at comparable scale levels, urban blocks exhibit varying textures of courtyard plots across different dimensions. As a spatial organizational form, courtyard spaces demonstrate remarkable regional identity and relatively well-preserved integrity within cities, serving as both a key element in urban morphology and a fundamental structural support for urban development.



Source: Literature[33]

Figure 2-4a Courtyard layout of Chengdu Shaocheng



Source: Literature[33]

Figure 2-4b: Diverse Courtyard Spaces in Chengdu Shaocheng

2.4.3.4 Types of On-Site Buildings

The architectural typology of historical districts is a systematic classification and categorization of individual buildings within these areas, based on core architectural elements including spatial configuration, structural composition, functional attributes, stylistic characteristics, and historical evolution. Serving as fundamental units that constitute the spatial fabric of historical districts, these typologies directly reflect the district's historical trajectory, regional culture, functional requirements, and social life through physical architectural manifestations. They also constitute the most essential research subject and

operational framework for heritage conservation, adaptive renovation, and revitalization design initiatives in historical districts.

The local architectural types within historical districts constitute a core subset of architectural classifications in these areas. These distinctive building styles emerge through long-term co-evolution between a region's natural geography, climatic conditions, historical context, social lifestyles, and indigenous construction techniques. They are uniquely shaped by the local environment, deeply intertwined with the district's developmental trajectory, and perfectly aligned with its inherent regional characteristics.

2.4.4 Social Networks

The indigenous social network of historical districts refers to a stable, strongly interconnected, and intergenerational social relationship system and community interaction structure spontaneously formed over centuries of organic development. This network is built upon geographical proximity, kinship ties, occupational symbiosis, and cultural identity among local residents, indigenous merchants, intangible cultural heritage artisans, and clan-based community leaders. Serving as the district's intrinsic "social fabric," it corresponds to the "material fabric" composed of street patterns and architectural textures, forming the foundational social support for self-sustenance, renewal, and resilience against external shocks.

2.4.4.1 Neighborhood Interaction Network

This constitutes the foundational and most prevalent element of native social networks. It represents a community-based neighborhood connection system formed by long-term cohabitation among local residents through geographical ties, serving as the core vehicle for the "neighborhood community" within urban areas. Distinct from the social interactions among strangers in modern urban residential complexes, it refers to a robust relational network established among generations of longtime neighbors through daily interactions, mutual support in daily life, and emotional bonds.

2.4.4.2 Business Collaboration Network

This constitutes the most distinctive element of the original social network in commercial historic districts. It represents a symbiotic collaboration system formed through centuries of trade development among local merchants, intangible cultural heritage artisans, and time-honored business operators, serving as the core social foundation for preserving traditional business formats. Unlike the purely competitive nature of modern commercial systems, this network embodies long-established complementary industrial chains, mutual

business support, and shared risk management among practitioners of indigenous business models within the district.

2.4.4.3 Clan Community Network

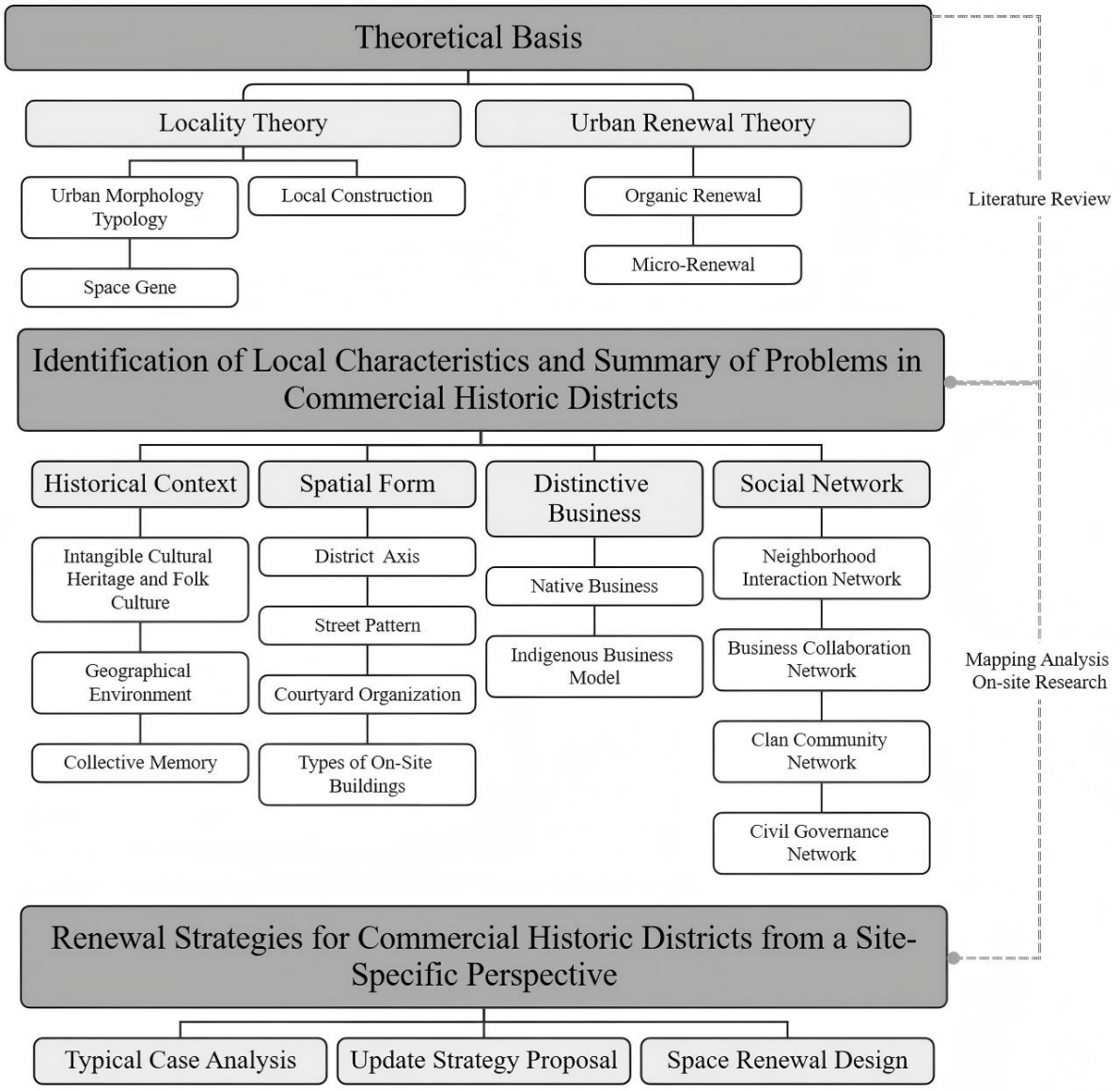
This represents a defining characteristic of the indigenous social network in Lingnan's Cantonese historical districts. The community connection system, rooted in familial kinship and clan ties, serves as the core vehicle for intergenerational transmission of regional culture, intangible heritage crafts, and traditional livelihood practices. Centered around clans sharing the same surname and family settlements, it establishes stable social structures through clan rituals, familial inheritance, and blood-based mutual aid. These networks encompass both traditional clan governance mechanisms and kinship-based commercial networks formed through inherited family business models, directly reflecting regional culture within social structures.

2.4.4.4 Civil Governance Network

This constitutes the top-level framework of indigenous social networks, representing a bottom-up system of grassroots governance and public participation spontaneously developed by local community entities through long-term evolution. Distinct from government-led top-down administrative control, it serves as the cornerstone for achieving endogenous sustainable development within neighborhoods. Centered around respected community figures, veteran business operators, clan elders, and neighborhood representatives, this informal governance system facilitates collective deliberation, public affairs coordination, conflict resolution, and self-management mechanisms. Its core components include grassroots mutual aid organizations, merchant self-governance groups, and neighborhood councils as fundamental governance units.

2.5 Construction of Theoretical Framework

This study identifies four key dimensions of locality in commercial historical districts: historical context (ICH and collective memory), spatial morphology (axes, street patterns, and typologies), distinctive formats (indigenous business models), and social networks (neighborhood, commercial, clan, and governance). Using Mapping analysis and field research, the study applies these concepts to diagnose challenges in the Zhuangyuanfang District. By synthesizing theory with empirical data and case studies, it establishes a closed-loop framework — "Theory – Identification – Problem – Strategy – Design" — offering areplicable model for urban renewal. (Figure 2-5)



Source: author

Figure 2-5: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 3 Current Situation Research of Zhuangyuanfang

3.1 Overview of Zhuangyuanfang District

Zhuangyuanfang Block, situated on the eastern side of Renmin South Road in Guangzhou's Yuexiu District, boasts a history spanning over 700 years. As the enduring urban core and origin of Guangzhou that has remained unchanged for millennia, Yuexiu District serves as the administrative, technological, cultural, and commercial hub, concentrating premium resources.

The core of Zhuangyuanfang District is an inner street that has evolved into a distinctive specialty street for student supplies and artisanal crafts since the establishment of its handicraft market in 1990. However, with rapid urban restructuring and transformation, Guangzhou's old city has encountered various challenges, and Zhuangyuanfang District faces multiple signs of decline.

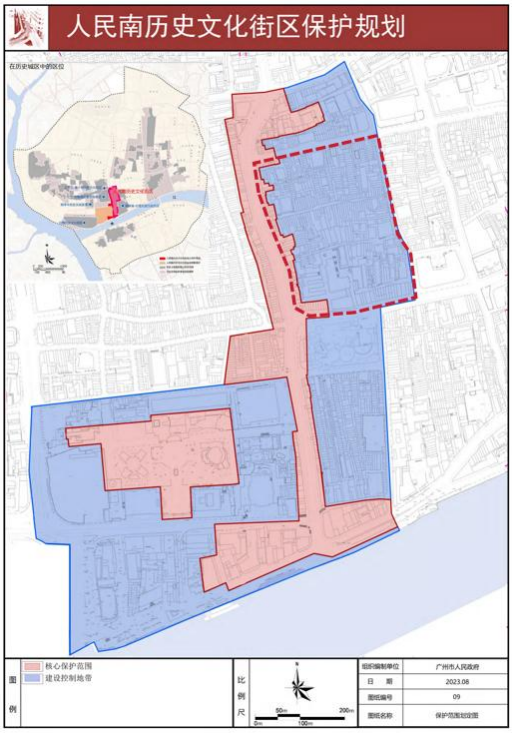
This study focuses on Zhuangyuanfang District (Figure 3-1), a traditional characteristic neighborhood in Guangzhou's old city. Spanning approximately 7.5 hectares from Daxin Road in the north to Yide Road in the south, and from Tiancheng Road in the east to Renmin South Road in the west, the area boasts a long history of urban development and exhibits distinctive urban morphological features with strong uniqueness and representativeness.



Source: Baidu Map

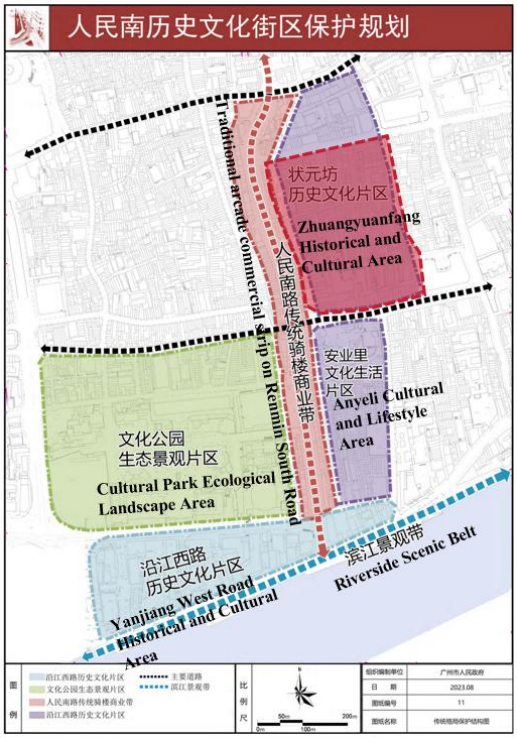
Figure 3-1 Research Scope of Zhuangyuanfang District

In the classification of historical and cultural districts, Zhuangyuanfang is part of the Renminnan Historical and Cultural District (Figure3-2a, b). Together with Anye Li Community, it forms the core traditional landscape area within Guangzhou's original ancient city walls, serving as a key component of the district's heritage protection initiative.



Source: Protection Plan for Renminnan Historic District [120]

Figure 3-2a Location of Zhuangyuanfang in Renmin South Historic District



Source: Protection Plan for Renminnan Historic District [120]

Figure 3-2b Zoning of Renminnan Historic District

3.2 Historical Context of Zhuangyuanfang District

3.2.1 Historical and Cultural Status

Zhuangyuan Fang stands as a pivotal hub for intangible cultural heritage preservation in the district. Serving as the central space for Lingnan cultural landmarks centered around this historic site, it maintains deep connections with the historical legacy of Zhang Zhensun, a Southern Song Dynasty imperial examination champion. Recognized as one of the three key traditional cultural assets under district-level protection, Zhuangyuan Fang forms a dual-core showcase system alongside Binjiang District within the comprehensive heritage utilization framework, constituting the cornerstone of the area's cultural heritage presentation.

As a 700-year-old landmark in Guangzhou (Figure3-3), Zhuangyuanfang is a paradigm for revitalizing China ’ s commercial historical districts. Its evolution and current contradictions offer a comprehensive empirical model for studying localized renewal, trade space transformation, and ICH-commerce integration. Within Guangzhou’s conservation framework, it serves as a critical platform for merging historical legacies with modern lifestyles, providing universal reference value for renewing similar urban heritage sites across Lingnan.



Source:Protection Plan for Renmin South Historic District[120]

Figure 3-3 Location of Zhuangyuanfang Block within Guangzhou City Wall

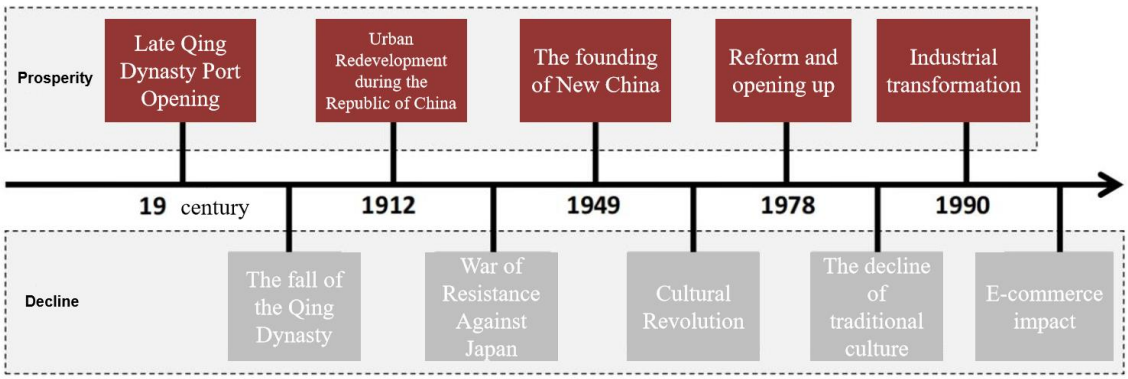
3.2.2 Historical Origins

The historical lineage of Zhuangyuanfang traces back to the Southern Song Dynasty, with its naming and spiritual core consistently revolving around Zhang Zhensun, the top scholar of Lingnan. Spanning a complete developmental cycle from the Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties through the Republic of China era to contemporary times, it has formed an enduring cultural heritage.

The district was originally named Datongfang (literally 'Tai Tong Lane'), but its name was changed in honor of Zhang Zhensun, the top imperial scholar of the Southern Song Dynasty. In 1271, Zhang Zhensun, who lived here, achieved the highest honor of imperial examination success, becoming the only literary top scholar in Lingnan. The local people

erected a memorial archway in his memory, and the neighborhood's name was subsequently renamed. The cultural significance of this site extends beyond mere admiration for academic achievements, reflecting Zhang Zhensun's profound moral character: His policy essays during the palace examination advocated the principle of 'caring for the people and promoting welfare'; during the Yuan army's southern invasion, he feigned surrender to protect the city before ultimately taking his own life for his country. His unwavering loyalty, bravery, and dedication to safeguarding the people elevated the' top scholar 'symbol into a spiritual emblem embodying Lingnan's patriotic spirit and the scholarly integrity of its literati.

The development of Zhuangfangyuan has undergone four distinct phases (Figure3-4) : First, from the Ming Dynasty to 1949, it transitioned from an outdoor marketplace outside the city walls into a permanent commercial street. Leveraging the "single-port trade" policy, it became a hub for theatrical costume handicrafts. After the Republic of China era, it evolved into an inner-city street but stagnated during the Anti-Japanese War. Second, from 1949 to 1978 during the planned economy period, industrial collectivization led to a sharp decline in shops, transforming it from a commercial street into a residential area. Third, from 1978 to 2007 after China's reform and opening-up, it capitalized on its geographical advantages to become a nationally renowned trendy commercial street, with thriving individual businesses. Fourth, since 2007, included in the historic city preservation zone, it has faced challenges such as e-commerce competition, fire safety regulations, and fragmented ownership, leading to declining physical commerce, rising vacancy rates, and transitional pains. This case provides a practical example for urban renewal in historic districts[108].



Source: Literature [93]

Figure 3-4 Historical Development Stages of Zhuangyuanfang

3.2.3 Core Cultural Connotation

(1) The Imperial Examination Culture of Valuing Education in Lingnan

As a rare historical district in Guangzhou's old town named after imperial examination figures, Zhuangyuan Fang stands as a tangible testament to the millennium-old imperial examination culture of Lingnan, vividly embodying the Guangfu region's cultural tradition of "valuing literature and scholarship." Spatial symbols within the district — including the Zhuangyuan Archway, sculptures depicting Zhang Zhen and Sun Sheng's lives, and walls showcasing imperial examination culture — continuously convey the core values of diligent learning, moral integrity, and practical application in governance.

(2) Traditional Handicrafts and Intangible Cultural Heritage Techniques of Lingnan

Since the Qing Dynasty, Zhuangyuanfang has been Guangzhou's handicraft epicenter, embodying the Lingnan "artisan spirit." During its peak, it flourished with diverse crafts including Cantonese embroidery (Gu embroidery), opera costumes (Figure3-5), jewelry, and wood carving. Iconic brands like Zhu Yisheng thrived here, and notably, its opera costume and embroidery techniques are now inscribed as National and Provincial Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).



Source: Internet

Figure 3-5: Culture of Guangdong Opera Costumes at Zhuangyuanfang

(3) Specimen of Commercial Cultural Evolution in Guangzhou, the Millennium Commercial Capital

The evolution of Zhuangyuan Fang's business landscape mirrors Guangzhou's commercial development throughout its millennium as a trading hub, serving as a quintessential snapshot of the city's commercial cultural transformation. From the Qing Dynasty's artisan workshop model featuring "front shops and rear workshops with self-production and self-sales," to its role as a centralized distribution center for Lingnan specialty goods during the Republic of China era; from small commodity wholesale districts after the

Reform and Opening-Up to becoming a trendy consumption landmark in the 1990s, and now embracing cultural-tourism integration and experiential consumption models, every phase of Zhuangyuan Fang's transformation has resonated with Guangzhou's urban commercial development. This evolution chronicles the city's commercial journey from traditional handicrafts to modern commerce, ultimately achieving seamless integration of culture, commerce, and tourism.

3.3 Distinctive Business Formats in Zhuangyuanfang District

3.3.1 Full Industrial Chain of Guangzhou Embroidery

The Guangxiu craft industry stands as the most authentic and central feature of Zhuangyuanfang District, serving as the primary industrial driver for its formation and development. Its growth was deeply intertwined with the foreign trade of the Thirteen Factories during the Qing Dynasty, reaching its zenith in the mid-Qing period and establishing a comprehensive industrial system with significant agglomeration effects.

During the Qianlong to Jiaqing and Daoguang reigns of the Qing Dynasty, as the Thirteen Factories monopolized foreign trade, Zhuangyuanfang emerged as the central hub for Guangzhou embroidery industry. The district alone hosted dozens of embroidery workshops and studios, ranking as the foremost among Guangzhou's three major embroidery clusters. Its influence extended to the Pearl River Delta hinterlands including Panyu, Shunde, and Nanhai, attracting merchants from Fujian, Zhejiang, Hunan, and other provinces to establish businesses here. They employed local artisans to produce embroidered goods for export. Throughout the late Qing and early Republican periods, Guangzhou embroidery shops remained concentrated in Zhuangyuanfang and Xinsheng Street areas, maintaining this industrial clustering effect for nearly two centuries.

Driven by the growing demand for foreign trade in the Thirteen Factories region, Zhuangyuanfang's Guangzhou embroidery industry broke away from traditional family-based workshop models, establishing a refined professional division of labor within the sector. This system categorized artisans into upper craftsmen (male workers specializing in critical embroidery areas) and lower craftsmen (female workers focusing on base fabrics and auxiliary components), marking the first professional specialization in Guangzhou embroidery history. The industry simultaneously developed a comprehensive production chain encompassing raw material processing, embroidery fabrication, finished product mounting, and domestic and international sales, achieving industrialized and scaled development [58].

The product system of Zhuangyuanfang Guangxiu is rich and diverse, primarily divided into three categories with distinct foreign trade-oriented characteristics: Daily practical embroidered items: covering two major categories — thread embroidery and bead embroidery — including bead embroidered cloud-shaped forehead ornaments, slippers, bead flowers, head ornaments, bead-embroidered aprons, embroidered scarves, clothing, and bedding, catering to daily life needs in both domestic and international markets; Artistic appreciation embroidered items: including embroidered calligraphy and paintings, religious-themed embroidered items, Western aristocratic portrait embroidery, and landscape embroidery, mostly customized based on overseas market samples, serving as a key export category for the Thirteen Factories; High-end custom export embroidered items: undertaking custom orders for European nobles and royalty's clothing, accessories, and decorative embroidered items, representing the pinnacle of China's handicraft exports at that time, with products exported to dozens of countries including Spain, the Philippines, the UK, France, the US, and Germany.

3.3.2 Yue Opera Costume Production

The production of Cantonese opera costumes stands as the most distinctive industry in Zhuangyuanfang District, a fusion of Guangdong embroidery and traditional opera culture that established the area as the birthplace and central hub of Lingnan theatrical attire. Historical records indicate that during the Shunzhi reign of the Qing Dynasty, Zhuangyuanfang had already become a settlement for costume artisans. The arrival of renowned costume maker Yu Maolong during the Kangxi era further intensified the industrial cluster, with his garments not only supplying local markets but also being commissioned by imperial courts. Throughout the late Qing and early Republican periods, Zhuangyuanfang remained Guangzhou's core production center for theatrical costumes, home to multiple master craftsmen. As traditional costume-making declined over time, only the Zhuangyuanfang Costume Factory (Figure 3-6) persists today. Its development has experienced dramatic fluctuations: flourishing during the Cantonese opera boom of the 1970s-80s, declining in the 1990s, rebounding post-2000, and being largely forgotten around 2008. In 2009, Guangzhou's costume-making techniques were recognized as provincial intangible cultural heritage, drawing renewed attention. However, the factory now faces significant challenges due to pandemic-induced order surges and subsequent sharp declines.



Source: Internet

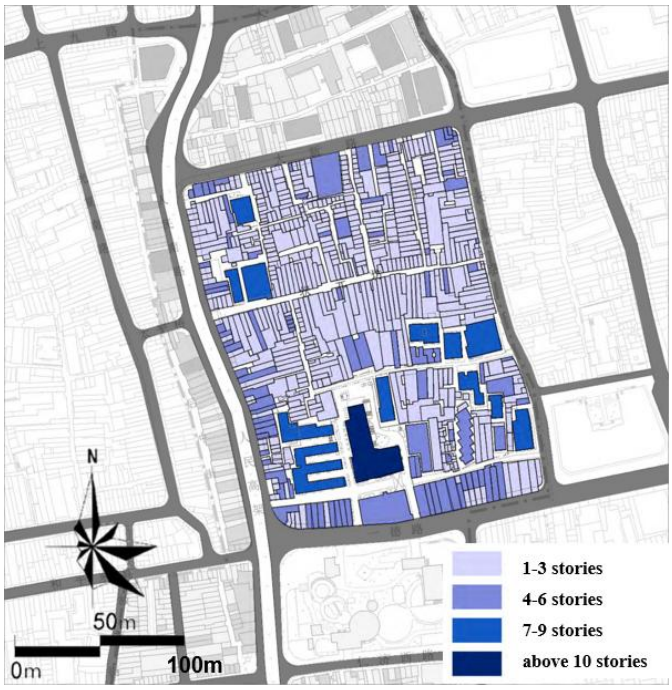
Figure 3-6: Photo of Zhuangyuanfang Costume Factory

3.4 Local Spatial Characteristics of Zhuangyuanfang District

3.4.1 Spatial Overview of Materials

3.4.1.1 Building Height

Zhuangyuanfang is characterized by low-rise dominance, with 1 – 3 story buildings forming 65% of its core traditional texture. Mid-rise structures (4 – 6 stories) account for 25%, while buildings above 7 stories comprise only 10%. Although rare, these high-rise intrusions disrupt the architectural fabric and abrupt height variations diminish the continuous pedestrian experience (Figure 3-7).

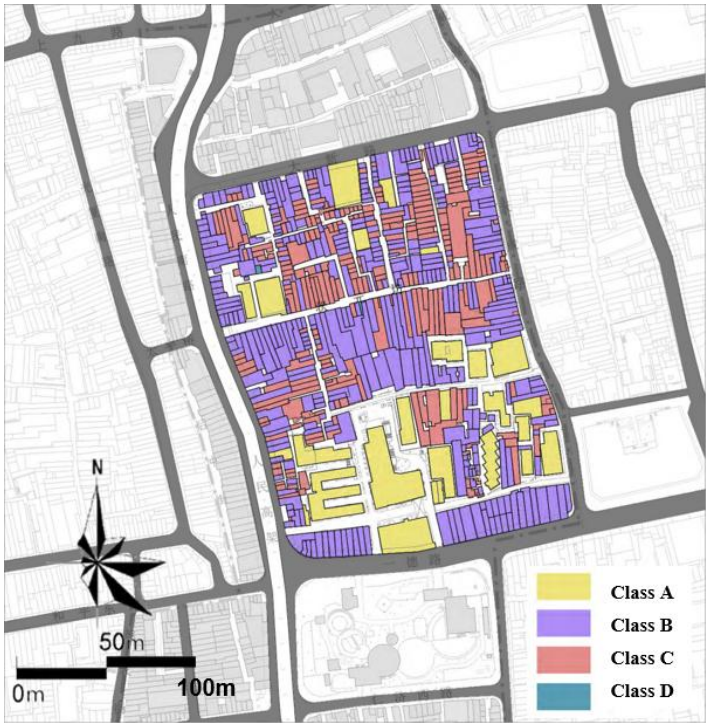


Source: based on literture[120], author furthered

Figure 3-7 Building Height Analysis of Zhuangyuanfang District

3.4.1.2 Construction Quality

Approximately 70% of the buildings within the site exhibit good or superior construction quality, while around 30% demonstrate substandard quality, necessitating urgent renovation and quality enhancement (Figure 3-8).

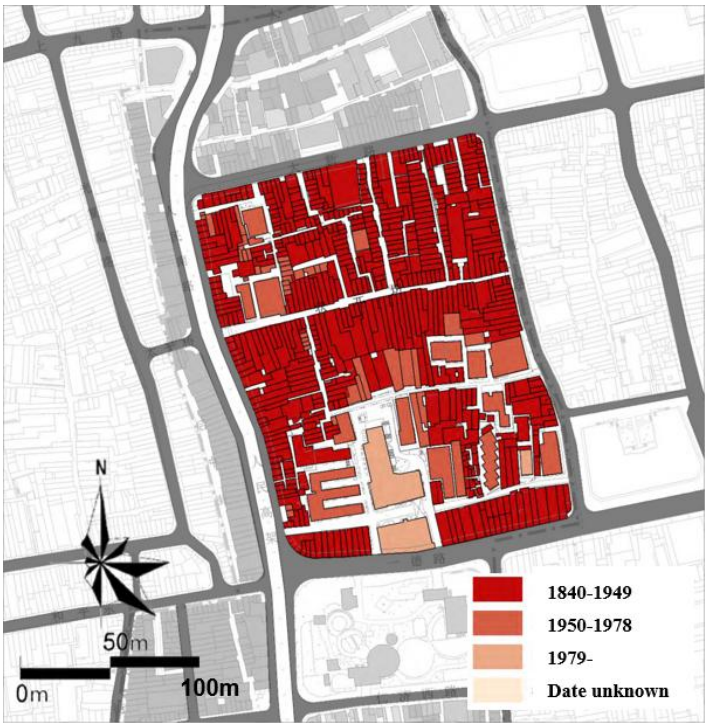


Source: based on literture[120], author furthered

Figure 3-8 Quality Analysis Diagram of Buildings in Zhuangyuanfang District

3.4.1.3 Age of Construction

The Zhuangfangyuan Historical District centers on imperial examination culture as its cultural foundation, spanning the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China era, and modern times. Its architectural style combines commemorative, folkloric, and contemporary elements. By integrating the district's architectural heritage and restoration progress, it comprehensively showcases the transformation from the peak of imperial examinations to modern cultural tourism revitalization. Seventy percent of the buildings date back to the Qing Dynasty and Republican era, holding profound historical and cultural significance (Figure 3-9).

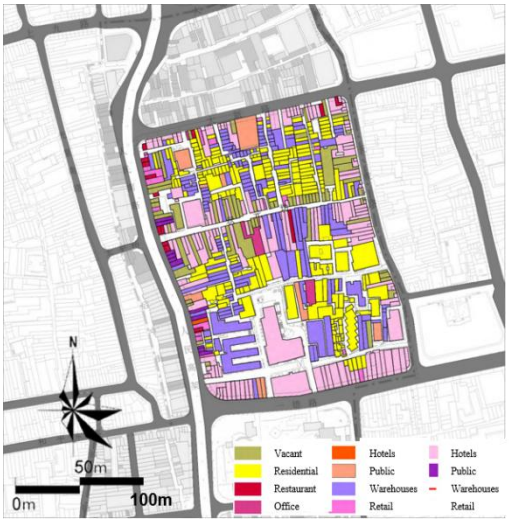


Source: based on literture[120], author furthered

Figure 3-9 Analysis of Construction Periods in Zhuangyuanfang District

3.4.1.4 Current Functional Status of the Building

Planning data shows a dominance of residential and commercial functions (wholesale/retail), but with a severe lack of public facilities. A critical issue is the "residential-to-storage conversion," where logistics facilities fragment the functional fabric. Additionally, 6% vacancy reflects land-use inefficiency. Given rapid urban changes, further research is required to reconcile planning data with actual architectural functions. (Figure 3-10a, b)





Source: based on literture[120], author furthered

Figure 3-10a Functional Analysis

Figure 3-10b Compatibility Analysis

3.4.1.5 Spatial Morphological Evolution

The spatial configuration of Zhuangyuanfang District, shaped by nearly 500 years of development (Figure 3-11), stands as a quintessential example of traditional commercial districts in Guangzhou's old city. It represents the most fundamental and visually distinctive feature of Zhuangyuanfang's local identity. This spatial system, deeply intertwined with Guangzhou's commercial history, Lingnan residential culture, and urban life, constitutes an irreplaceable historical and cultural heritage. It serves as the core foundation for future revitalization efforts, requiring prioritized restoration, preservation, and continuity.

The street system framework has remained rigidly preserved for centuries. The hierarchical structure of "main streets and inner alleys" centered around Zhuangyuanfang Main Street has undergone no fundamental changes since Guangzhou's urban expansion during the Ming Dynasty. The original narrow alleyway dimensions—260 meters in length and 2-7 meters in width—have been fully retained, with only the construction of Renminnan Elevated Road causing localized impacts on traffic flow. Secondly, the urban layout is characterized by fragmented small plots with individual property rights, with only a few collectively-owned plots undergoing consolidated development. This maintains the authentic Lingnan commercial district texture featuring compact bays and deep interiors. Thirdly, the architectural sequence consistently follows the foundation of bamboo tube row houses. Even during reconstruction, developers strictly adhere to original land boundaries, with only a limited number of mid-to-high-rise apartment complexes disrupting the original row house pattern, resulting in exceptionally intact street alley networks.

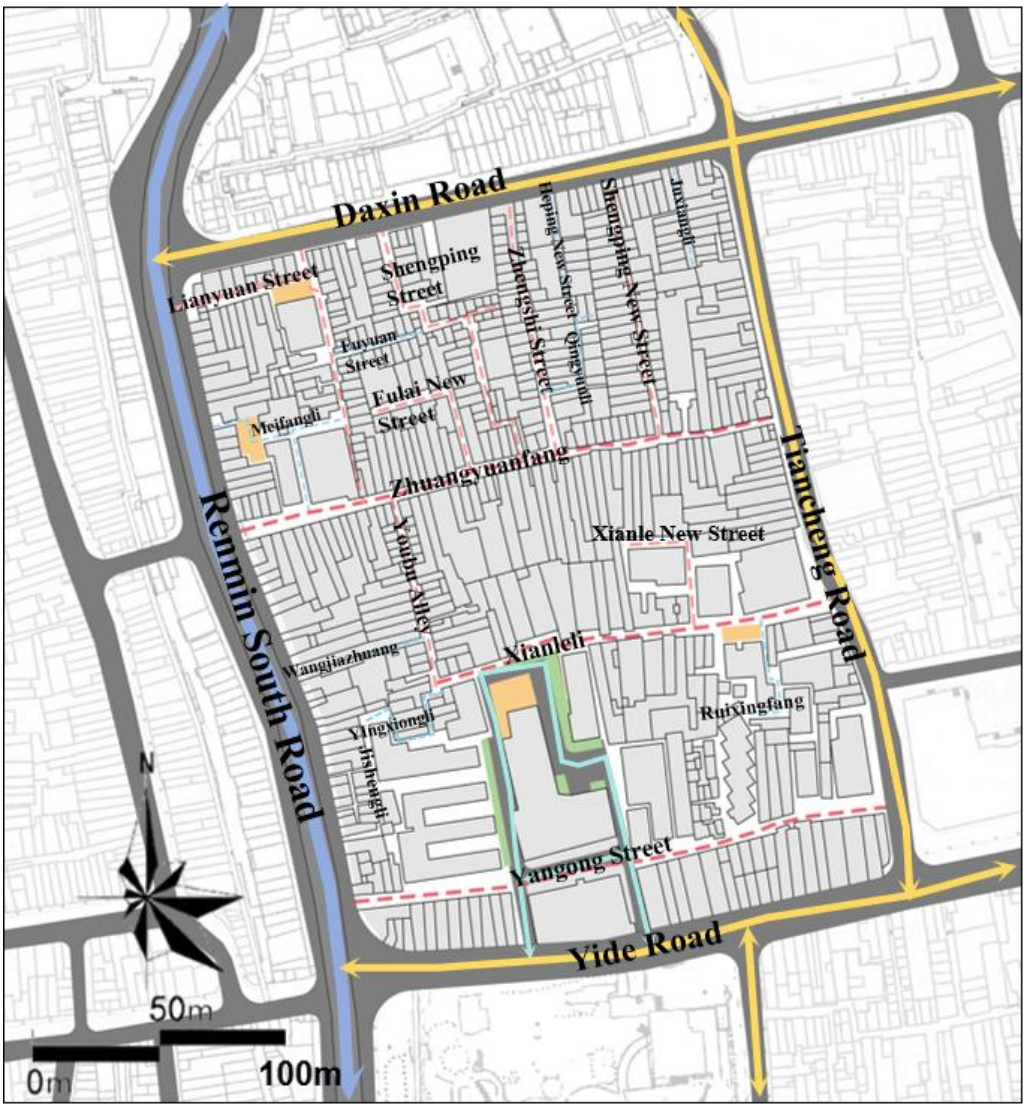


Source: Literature [93]

Figure 3-11 Evolution of Spatial Structure in Zhuangyuanfang District

3.4.2 Street Texture

The Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood boasts a distinctive street network featuring historically preserved back alleys. Its street system is categorized into five tiers based on road classification, accessibility, and width standards: urban arterial roads, secondary arterial roads, site main streets, site secondary streets, and neighborhood cluster roads.(Figure 3-12) The main and secondary streets form the core road framework of the neighborhood, while the neighborhood cluster roads organize internal traffic flow.



Source: author

Figure 3-12 Overview of Street Texture in Zhuangyuanfang District

Table 3-1 Classification Overview of Streets and Alleys in Zhangyuanfang

Source: author summarized based on research

Road grade	Road name	passage property	functional classification	Road alignment
City arterial roads	Renmin South Road	motor vehicle lane, non-motor vehicle lane, pedestrian walkway	Arcade Commercial Street	north and south
Urban secondary arterial road	Yide Road	motor vehicle lane, non-motor vehicle lane, pedestrian walkway	Arcade Commercial Street	east and west
	Daxin Road	motor vehicle lane, non-motor vehicle lane, pedestrian walkway	Arcade Commercial Street	east and west
Main Street of the District	Tiancheng Road	motor vehicle lane, non-motor vehicle lane, pedestrian walkway	Non-shophouse commercial street	north and south
	Zhuangyuan Fang	Mixed traffic of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles	Non-shophouse commercial street	east and west
	Yan Gong Street	Partial motor vehicle lanes with mixed pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle traffic	Non-shophouse commercial street	east and west
	Xianleli	Mixed traffic of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles	Residential area with a few commercial properties	east and west
Secondary Street of the District	Lianyuan Street	Mixed traffic of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles	Residence	L mould
	Shengping Street	Mixed traffic of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles	Residence	Z mould
	Fulai Xin Street	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	L mould
	Zhengshi Street	Mixed traffic of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles	Residence	north and south
	Youbu Alley	Mixed traffic of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles	Storage, Commerce	north and south
Lifang Group Road	Xianle New Street	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	L mould
	Shengping New Street	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	north and south
	Meifangli	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	L mould
	Yŏngung-ri	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	concave type
	Fuyuan Street	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	east and west
	Qingyunli	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	L mould
	Peace New Street	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	north and south
	Juxiangli	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	north and south
	Rui Xing Fang	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	L mould
	Wangjiazhuang	Walking as the primary mode of transportation	Residence	east and west

3.4.2.1 Municipal-level connecting streets and alleys

The district's road network is defined by a "cross-shaped" framework of arterial and secondary roads. Renmin South Road, a primary arterial and Class I arcade street, handles the core north-south traffic and urban connectivity. Secondary arterials including Yide, Daxin, and Tiancheng Roads form the secondary commercial backbone. Specifically, Yide and Daxin are east-west Class I arcade streets balancing traffic with commerce, while Tiancheng Road serves as a non-arched north-south supplementary corridor. (Figure 3-13)

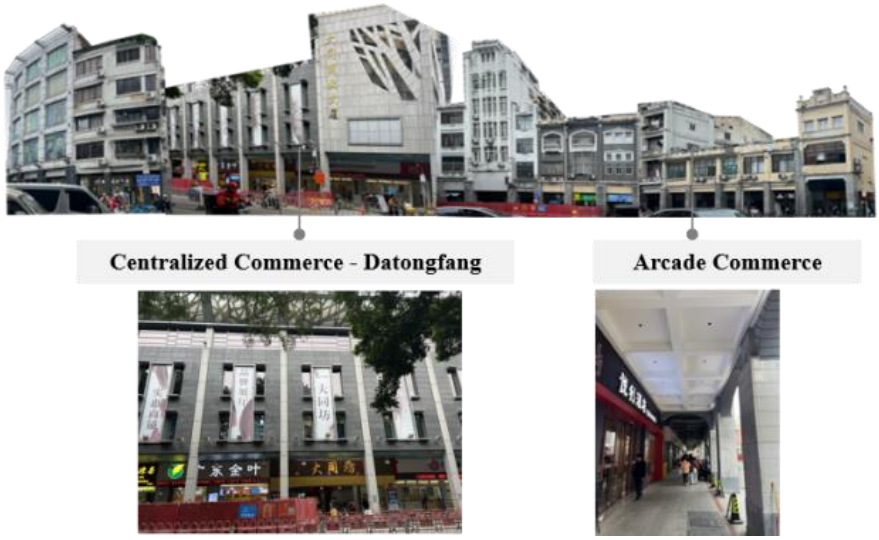


Source: author

Figure 3-13 Building Scope and Current Function Along Major and Secondary Urban Roads

(1) Arcade Commercial Street – Yide Road

Yide Road (Figure 3-14), a century-old street in Yuexiu District, radiates the authentic "Cantonese street life atmosphere." Stretching approximately 1,150 meters from Renmin South Road in the west to Haizhu Square in the east, it was once the site of Guangzhou's southern city wall. The road was constructed in 1920 after the wall's demolition and was named after the former Yide Community School. This study focuses on the 250-meter section of Yide Road west of Tiancheng Road.



Source: author

Figure 3-14 Continuous Architectural Features and Key Buildings of Yide Road

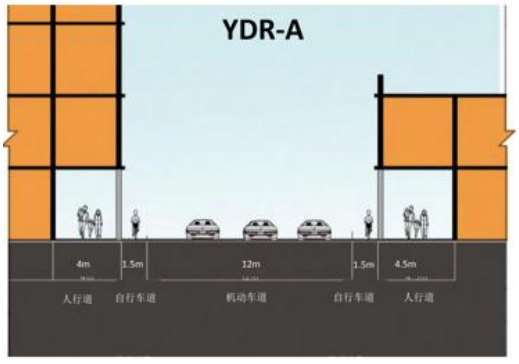
As the core protected arcade street in Renminnan Historical and Cultural Block, Yide Road currently exhibits a distinctive blend of traditional commercial ambiance and modern wholesale business operations.

Yide Road maintains a vibrant wholesale ecosystem with strong synergy with Zhuangyuanfang. Its commercial framework centers on three pillars: garment wholesale, customized packaging support, and neighborhood dining. This mature, wholesale-driven environment attracts a diverse clientele of regional buyers and local residents. Spatially, the street features a traditional arcade interface with varied building heights, occasionally punctuated by modern large-scale commercial structures (Figure 3-15a).



Source: author

Figure 3-15a Current status of nodes in Datongfang Commercial Building



Source: literature[117]

Figure 3-15b: Typical cross-section of Yide Road

The designated section (Figure 3-15b) features concentrated large-scale commercial complexes serving core wholesale and logistics functions. The Datongfang Commercial Building (Figure 3-15a), the only major commercial structure within the site, creates a striking spatial contrast with the surrounding narrow arcade buildings. Specializing in garment

wholesale operations, it also integrates warehousing and unloading facilities. As the only motor vehicle-accessible area within the study zone, the Datongfang Commercial Building district experiences frequent freight handling and dense logistics activities, establishing itself as the primary distribution hub for the wholesale industry. This development complements the surrounding pedestrian-oriented traditional streets through both transportation networks and functional synergy.

(2) Arcade Commercial Street – Renmin South Road

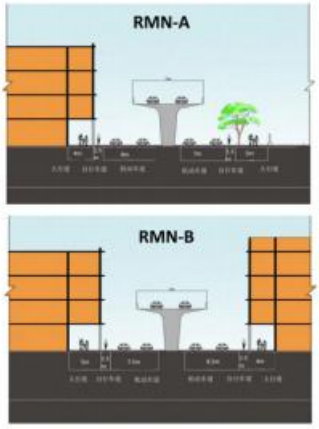
Renmin South Road (Figure3-16), the core first-class arcade commercial street in the Renmin South Historical and Cultural District, stands as a quintessential example of Lingnan-style arcade architecture. Its current state reflects a complex interplay between historical significance and developmental constraints. While retail commerce dominates with diverse business formats and retains an authentic urban atmosphere, a significant number of arcade spaces remain vacant, resulting in inefficient spatial utilization. Moreover, the district's distinctive intangible cultural heritage tradition of theatrical costume production faces relocation challenges, directly impacting the living preservation of local cultural heritage and the continuity of regional identity.



Source: author

Figure 3-16 Photos of Renmin South Road

No.140 Renmin South Road (Figure 3-18), a protected arcade, remains vacant due to the conflict between preservation and adaptive reuse. Although it serves as a critical pedestrian hub linking major thoroughfares to Zhuangyuanfang, its potential is hindered by elevated bridges. These structures create physical and visual barriers, disrupting the traditional Lingnan facade's continuity and compromising the district's commercial ambiance.



Source: literature[117]

Figure 3-17 Typical cross-section of Renmin South Road



Source: author

Figure 3-18 Vacant No.140 Renmin South Road

(3) Arcade Commercial Street – Daxin Road

Daxin Road, a Class I arcade street, is characterized by a severe 60% vacancy rate and low commercial efficiency. Conversely, its southern side serves as a dense public service hub, housing eldercare, health centers, and administrative offices. The street maintains excellent accessibility (Figure 3-19) through a hierarchical network of six internal alleys and clustered entrances, facilitating seamless connectivity between the commercial front and residential hinterland.

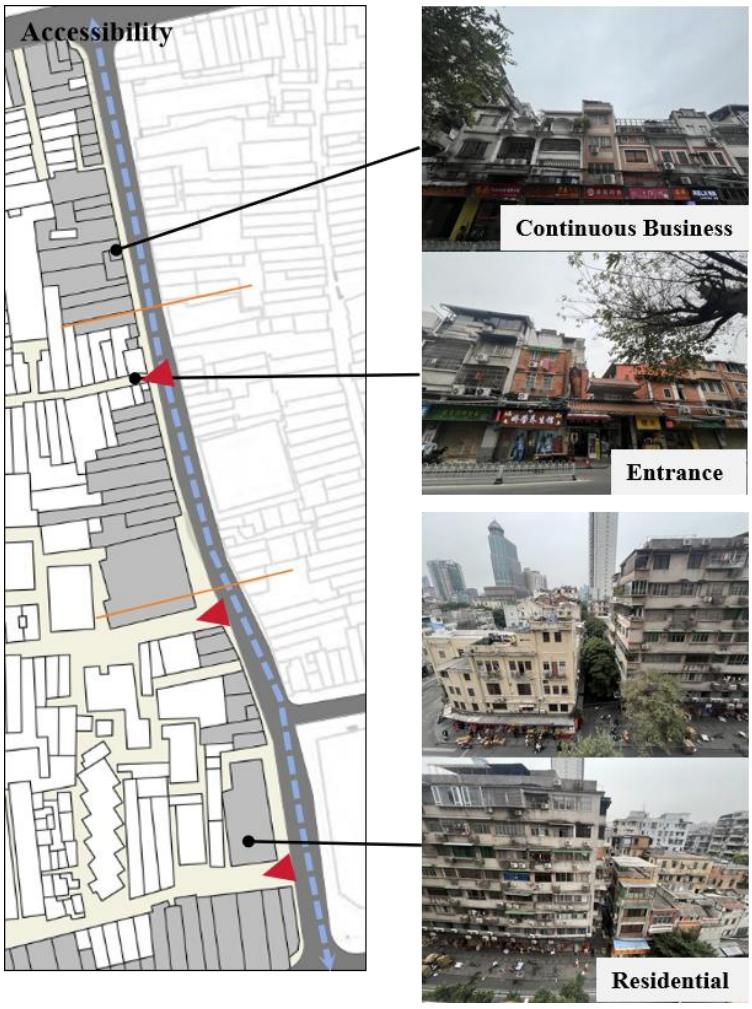


Source: author

Figure 3-19 Accessibility and Photos of Daxin Road Alleys

(4) Non-arcade commercial street – Tiancheng Road

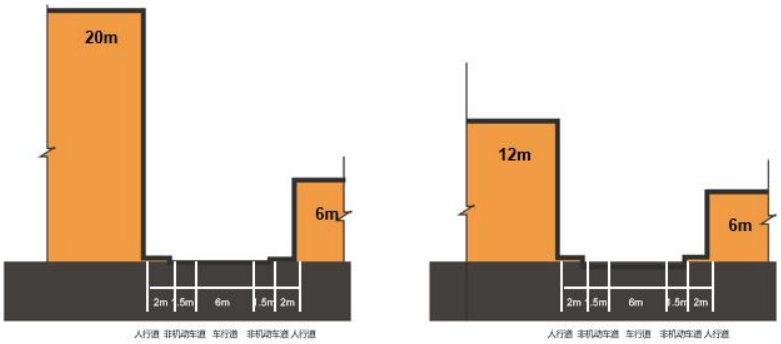
Tiancheng Road functions as a non-arcade commercial corridor, creating a distinct structural contrast with surrounding arcade streets. While its linear layout maintains facade continuity, the area is characterized by mixed architectural volumes and low efficiency due to vacant wholesale spaces. As a pivotal gateway to three main district streets (Figure 3-20), it bridges urban roads with inner alleys. However, the heterogeneity between 2 – 3 story mixed-use buildings and large-scale residences compromises the street's visual harmony.



Source: author

Figure 3-20 Accessibility and current status photos of Tiancheng Road streets

The architectural volumes on both sides of Tiancheng Road are mixed, with large-scale buildings mainly consisting of multi-story residential structures located near the intersection of Tiancheng Road and Yide Road, as well as along the mid-section of Tiancheng Road. The northern section primarily features a continuous commercial street with smaller-scale buildings (Figure 3-21).



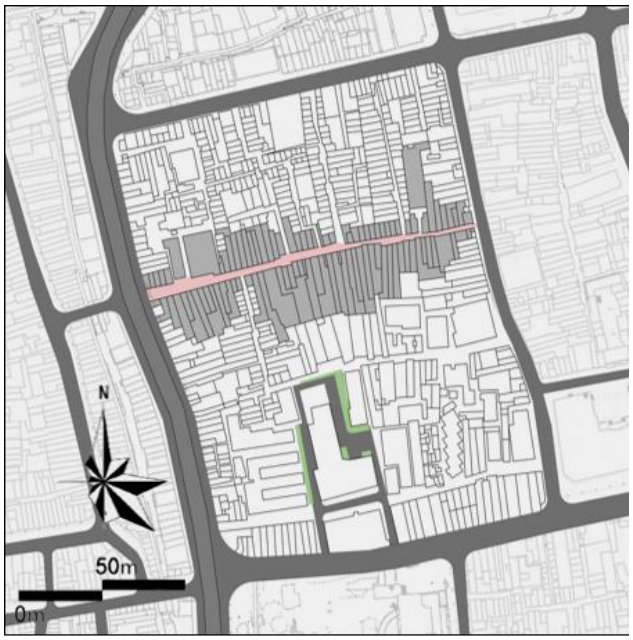
Source: author

Figure 3-21 Typical road cross-section of Tiancheng Road

3.4.2.2 Main Street of the Site

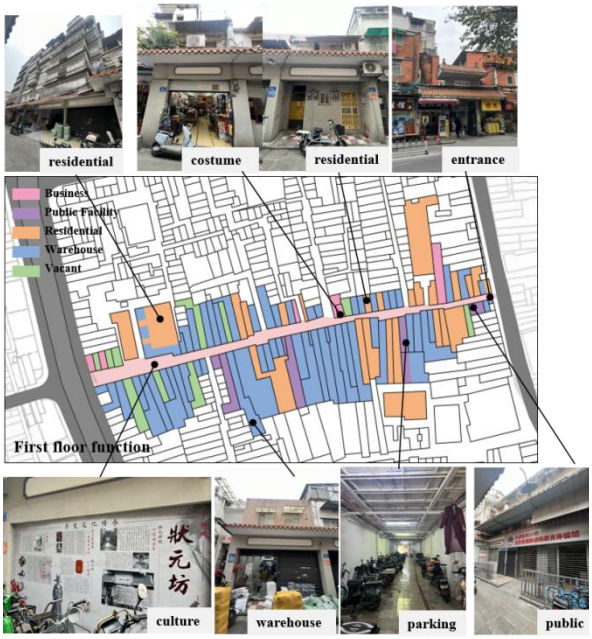
(1) Zhuangyuanfang

Zhuangyuanfang Street (Figure 3-22) serves as the most central thoroughfare within the design scope, where historical-cultural value and contemporary developmental challenges are deeply intertwined. The core issues are concentrated across four dimensions: functional zoning, spatial experience, public infrastructure, and cultural dissemination.



Source: author

Figure 3-22 Research scope of Zhuangyuanfang Community



Source: author

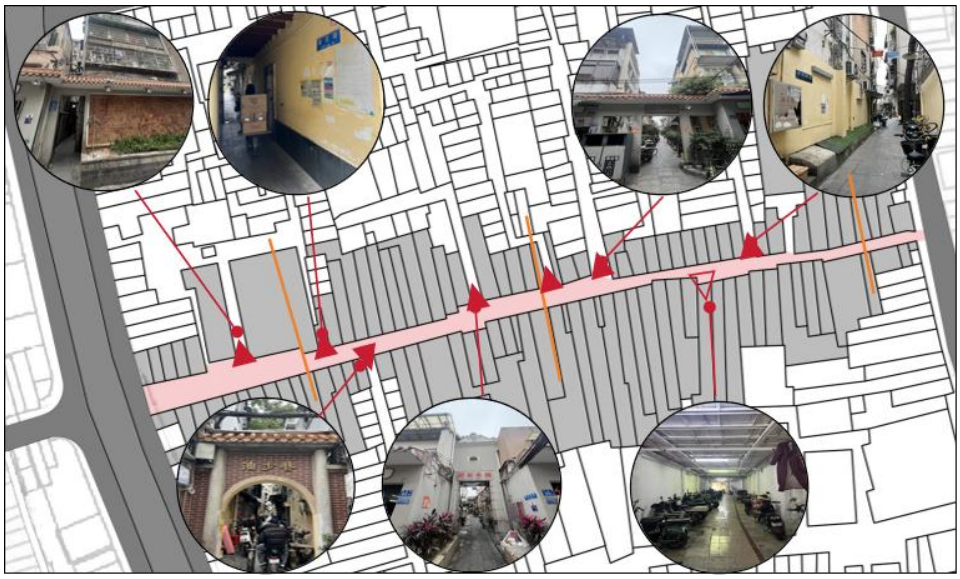
Figure 3-23 Photos of first-floor functions and current status of Zhuangyuanfang

The streets and alleys primarily serve storage purposes (Figure 3-23), with severely declining commercial activities and the erosion of traditional cultural characteristics. In Zhuangyuanfang Community, approximately 70% of buildings currently function as warehouses, mainly handling goods storage and distribution for the local wholesale industry, serving as supporting storage facilities for the wholesale supply chain. Scattered residential houses, public facilities, and multi-story residences are sparsely distributed, failing to form concentrated residential clusters. This has resulted in a severely weakened community atmosphere, lacking neighborhood interaction and daily life vibrancy. In terms of commercial activities, apart from a few remaining clothing wholesale shops, traditional intangible cultural heritage industries such as theatrical costumes and Guangdong embroidery — once core features of the area—have nearly disappeared. The community has completely deviated from its historical positioning as a hub for handicrafts and thriving commerce since the Ming and

Qing dynasties.

The traffic system suffers from chaotic organization, poor pedestrian experience, and latent safety hazards. Zhuangyuanfang, a designated traditional second-category alleyway and Mashi Street, currently operates under a mixed traffic model for non-motorized vehicles and pedestrians without clear zoning or regulatory measures. Dominated by warehousing functions, non-motorized vehicles must handle core freight operations while pedestrian cargo carts shuttle frequently. Within narrow alleyways measuring 5-7 meters in width (with the narrowest point reaching 2 meters), these vehicles occupy substantial pedestrian pathways, causing traffic congestion, disrupted pedestrian flow, and heightened risks of collisions and other safety incidents.

The Zhuangyuanfang district exhibits high building density with limited public spaces and monotonous functions. Although sporadic public facilities exist, there is a lack of centralized open areas. As a historic alleyway with over 700 years of history centered on Zhuangyuan culture, its cultural displays remain singular, relying solely on minimal promotional murals without systematic signage. While preserving traditional granite stone textures, the pavement shows localized damage and inadequate maintenance, with some buildings suffering from unauthorized constructions and chaotic signage that clash with the historic ambiance. A few multi-story residences blended with traditional architecture create stark scale contrasts, disrupting visual continuity. Serving as the central thoroughfare, Zhuangyuanfang boasts strong accessibility (Figure 3-24) —linking to secondary streets to the north and potentially connecting to southern roads. Street widths vary dramatically, stretching up to 9 meters on the west side and narrowing to just 2.4 meters on the east. Building heights differ significantly, resulting in a mix of multi-story residences and low-rise bamboo tube houses.



Source: author

Figure 3-24 Accessibility of Zhuangyuanfang Street

(2) Xianleli

Xianleli constitutes the core residential area with a pronounced living ambiance within the study scope. Currently, its development prioritizes residential functions, exhibiting distinct characteristics such as clusters of traditional dwellings, mixed architectural types, yet lacking public amenities and being adversely affected by surrounding freight traffic.

The area prioritizes residential functions with numerous traditional dwellings but lacks adequate public facilities (Figure 3-26). Characterized by concentrated Lingnan-style residences, it exudes a strong living atmosphere yet suffers from insufficient recreational and convenience amenities, compromising both living environments and daily accessibility. The architectural composition blends traditional and modern elements, with Lingnan dwellings coexisting alongside contemporary residences while preserving historical textures across eras (Figure 3-27). However, stylistic diversity disrupts visual harmony. Adjacent to unloading yards, inadequate isolation measures are evident. The absence of buffer zones allows freight operations to generate noise and dust, disturbing residential areas, encroaching on pedestrian spaces, and undermining the slow-paced urban experience.



Source: author

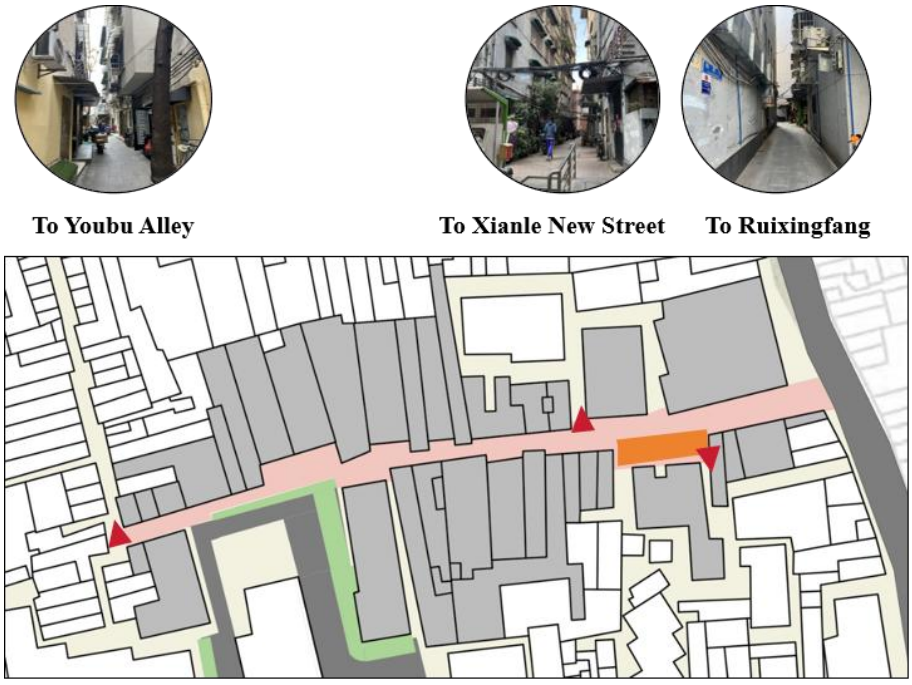
Figure 3-25 Research Scope of Xianleli



Source: author

Figure 3-26 Functional Layout and Photos of the First Floor of Xianleli

Xianleli suffers from poor external accessibility and low connectivity efficiency (Figure 3-28). Only its western end features a direct passage through Youbu Lane leading to Zhuangyuanfang Main Street, while other routes either exhibit winding paths with excessive length or narrow dimensions causing traffic congestion. The overall external connectivity remains inadequate, which not only affects residents' daily commutes but also hinders pedestrian flow coordination and spatial integration with the core urban area.

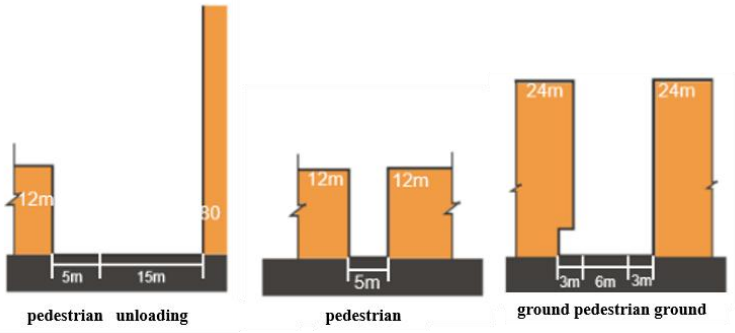


Source: author

Figure 3-27 Accessibility of Xianleli Street Alleys

The scale variation of Xianleli (Figure 3-28) is pronounced, stemming from the diverse

architectural scales and types on both sides. The street is primarily divided into three sections: The western section near Datongfang features vacant buildings on the north side and high-rise commercial complexes on the south side, making it the widest part of the street. The central section near traditional residential areas shows a narrower street width with a pedestrian walkway approximately 5 meters wide, flanked by 3-4 story residential buildings of similar scale. The eastern section near multi-story residences consists of 8-story buildings with widened front courtyards and basic public facilities.



Source: author

Figure 3-28 Typical Road Cross-section in Xianleli

(3) Yan Gong Street

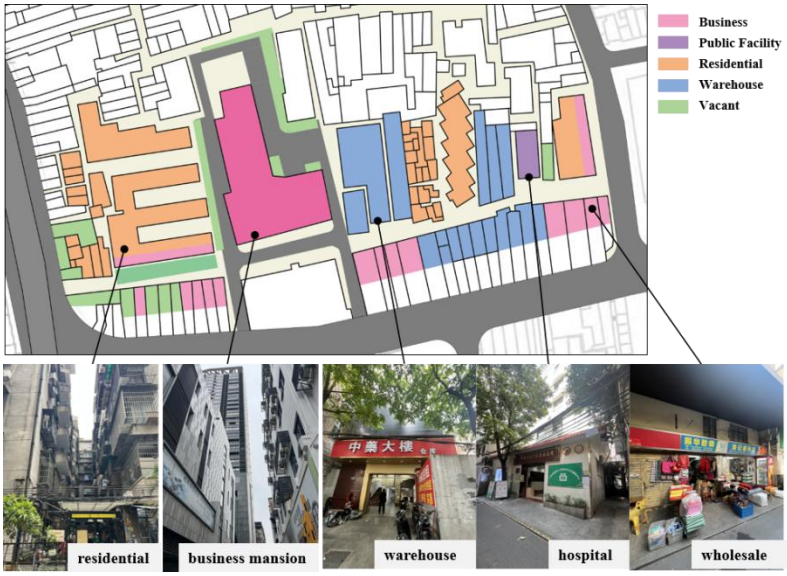
Yan Gong Street, an east-west thoroughfare in the Renminnan District, spans 174.3 meters with widths of 2.8 – 7.1 meters (Figure 3-29). Despite partial encroachment by private plots, it remains a key connector. Influenced by the adjacent Datongfang area, the street is currently dominated by logistics operations and storage functions, resulting in a fragmented pedestrian environment within its mixed-use commercial and residential surroundings.



Source: author

Figure 3-29 Research Scope of Yan Gong Street

The warehouse function is prominent, deeply integrated into the regional wholesale industry chain (Figure 3-30). Directly influenced by the concentrated commercial and warehousing operations at Datongfang Commercial Building, Yanguang Street has become the core transportation corridor for motor vehicle freight in the area, specifically handling cargo transportation demands from surrounding wholesale businesses. However, the pedestrian space remains fragmented with poor circulation experience. The high-frequency freight flow lines surrounding Datongfang Commercial Building have segmented Yanguang Street's original pedestrian pathways into three distinct sections, significantly impairing pedestrian connectivity.

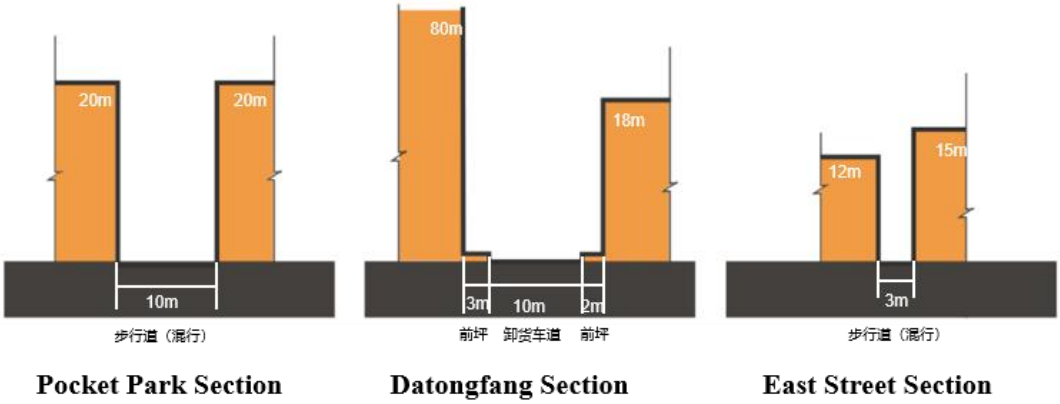


Source: author

Figure 3-30 Functional layout and photos of the ground floor of Yan Gong Street

Yan Gong Street exhibits significant scale variations, with a width range of 2.8-10 meters, and demonstrates marked abrupt changes in building heights along both sides (Figure 3-31). It can be roughly divided into three sections: the pocket park west of Datongfang, the unloading area of Datongfang, and the street east of Datongfang.

On both sides of the pocket park are multi-story residential buildings standing 20 meters tall with 10-meter spacing. At Datongfang, the truck unloading lane spans 10 meters wide, featuring a 2-3 meter front plaza in front of the buildings. The structures on both sides are large-scale concentrated commercial complexes. The eastern street, approximately 3 meters wide, is lined with traditional bamboo tube houses used for storage or residential purposes, with relatively smaller building volumes.

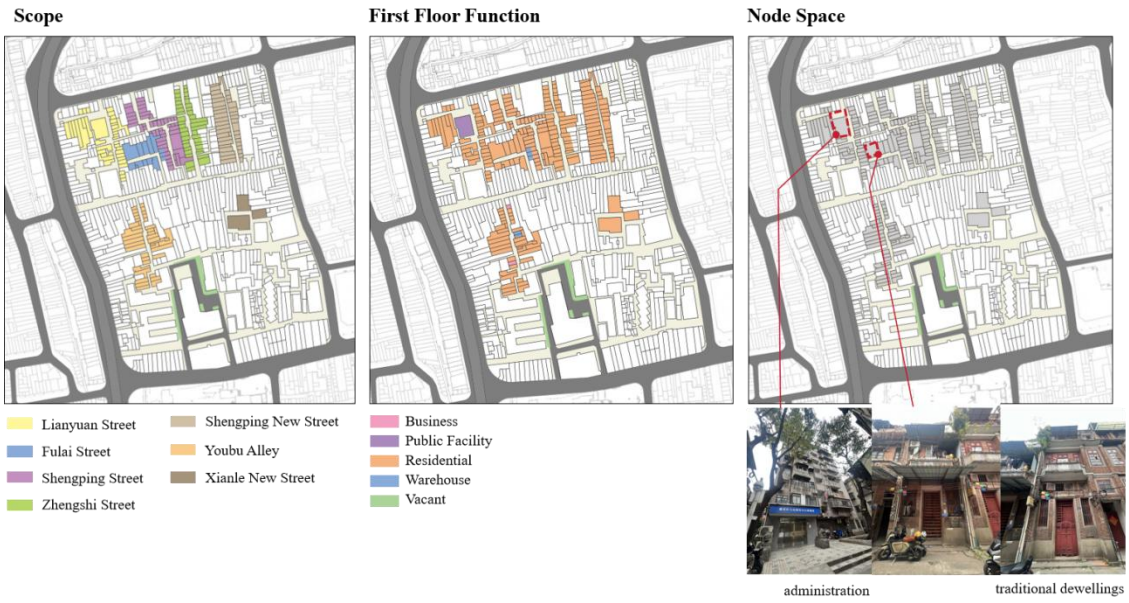


Source: author

Figure 3-31 Scale variation of Yan Gong Street

3.4.2.3 Secondary Streets on the Site

The secondary street network comprises seven thoroughfares: Lianyuan Street, Fulai New Street, Shengping Street, Zhengshi Street, Shengping New Street, Youbu Alley, and Xianle New Street. Given their similar street configurations and shared residential functions, these areas are analyzed holistically. While most secondary streets exhibit similar functional patterns, certain architectural landmarks warrant particular attention. For instance, at the intersection of Lianyuan Street and Daxin Road, the ground floor of multi-story residential buildings houses the People's Street Comprehensive Administrative Law Enforcement Office. The open courtyard in front, adorned with ancient trees, provides essential physical infrastructure for public spaces. Fulai New Street showcases traditional residential architecture that preserves historical cultural heritage, offering localized references for vernacular restoration and establishing architectural frameworks for conservation efforts (Figure 3-32).



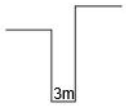
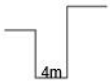
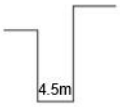
Source: author

Figure 3-32 Comprehensive Analysis Diagram of Secondary Streets in the Site

The streets and alleys within Zhuangyuanfang exhibit spatial characteristics defined by "narrow but varied dimensions and strong enclosedness." Their widths range from 1.0 to 8.0 meters, with the predominant range concentrated between 2.0 and 6.0 meters. The narrowest section at Shengping Street measures merely 1.0 meters, while local segments of Shengping New Street and Lianyuan Street approach main street scale. The height-to-width ratio (D/H) ranges from 0.2 to 0.83, with 86% of alleys having D/H <0.5, creating a pronounced enclosed and oppressive atmosphere — only Zhengshi Street (0.83) remains relatively open. Typical cross-sections (Table 3-2) feature stepped terraces, while Zhengshi Street demonstrates symmetrical regularity. This spatial configuration is a product of traditional mixed-use commercial-residential development, meeting the operational needs of handicraft workshops adhering to the "front shop, rear workshop" model while enhancing alleyway spatial identity and urban ambiance, aligning seamlessly with the architectural style of Guangfu historical districts.

Table 3-2 Overview of Sub-street Scale for Sites

Source: author

Street names	Width range (m)	Typical section	D/H
Lianyuan Street	1.4-8.0		0.25
Shengping Street	1.0-5.5		0.44
Fulai Xin Street	3.0-4.5		0.33
Zhengshi Street	3.0-6.0		0.83
Youbu Alley	2.0-5.0		0.5
Xianle New Street	3.0-5.0		0.2
Shengping New Street	4.1-5.8		0.38

3.4.2.4 Li Fang Group Road

Cluster roads, also referred to as "branch alleys," constitute the fourth-tier street category within urban blocks and are relatively numerous. These roads exhibit two primary characteristics: they predominantly adopt an end-of-block layout with entrances located at urban roads, main streets, or secondary streets; compared to secondary streets, they are narrower in width, with street dimensions unsuitable for vehicular access, often serving as pedestrian walkways.

3.4.3 Building Types

As the core component of Renminnan Historical and Cultural Block, Zhuangyuanfang Street exhibits a composite architectural character where traditional architectural heritage coexists with modern functional structures. The area preserves the historical texture of Lingnan Cantonese residential houses and arcade buildings while incorporating contemporary architecture tailored to modern commercial and residential needs, collectively forming a well-

structured spatial system with clear hierarchy and complementary functions. Based on architectural morphology, functional attributes, and spatial organization characteristics, the core buildings within the district can be categorized into four distinct types.

3.4.3.1 Arcade Commercial and Residential Building

Arcaded buildings serve as carriers of historical urban landscapes, featuring a classic "commercial spaces below, residential areas above" layout. The ground floor centers around shops and arcade walkways, complemented by auxiliary living spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms. Residential units occupy the second floor and above, preserving traditional ventilation and lighting structures like courtyard designs, creating a unique spatial configuration that blends commercial and residential functions with interconnected alleyways. These buildings are predominantly found along major urban thoroughfares including Yide Road, Renmin South Road, and Daxin Road, standing as iconic representatives of Lingnan-style arcade commercial streets.

3.4.3.2 Large Commercial Buildings

This architectural complex serves as a modern centralized commercial hub, featuring a layout centered around a large atrium and zoned retail spaces designed for integrated commercial, warehousing, and logistics distribution functions, complemented by supporting facilities including freight corridors. Located exclusively in Datongfang Commercial Building, it functions as the core node for wholesale trade in the district. The functional configuration follows a "arcade ground-floor retail + centralized commercial" model: the ground level retains the arcade retail facade, while the upper section accommodates centralized commercial spaces and storage areas dedicated to wholesale operations, inventory management, and logistics processing.

3.4.3.3 Non-boulevard commercial-residential buildings (bamboo tube houses)

This architectural style epitomizes traditional Lingnan residential architecture, featuring a distinctive "bamboo tube" layout with narrow frontage and deep interior spaces. Both the ground and second floors prioritize living functions, incorporating kitchens, bedrooms, and communal areas while preserving traditional elements like inner courtyards and skylights for ventilation and natural lighting. Some ground floors incorporate commercial elements. Widely distributed across urban streets and alleys, these structures form the core of traditional neighborhood residential fabric. The vertical design adheres to the classic "commercial space + residential living" logic, with limited retail units on the ground level and fully residential upper floors, faithfully maintaining the spatial proportions and daily life scenarios

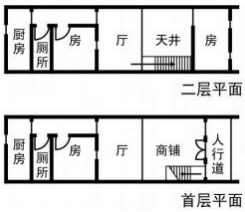
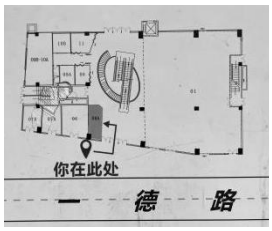
characteristic of Cantonese traditional dwellings.

3.4.3.4 Row-type Multi-story Residential Building

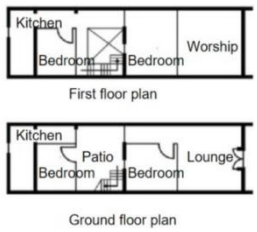
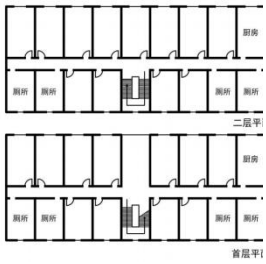
These buildings serve as modern residential complexes featuring a typical row-house layout with units arranged along shared corridors, creating standardized, high-density living spaces. Some ground floors incorporate commercial or public service facilities. Primarily located in neighborhoods such as Tiancheng Road, Zhuangyuanfang, Yangong Street, and Xianleli, they form the core infrastructure for contemporary residential functions in urban districts. The vertical design prioritizes residential use, with ground floors accommodating commercial or public amenities while upper floors remain dedicated to living spaces, demonstrating a harmonious integration of modern residential architecture with traditional street textures.

Table 3-3 Summary of Building Types in Zhuangyuanfang District

Source: author

Building type	typical plane	Real photo	Main distribution	Typical vertical functional form
architectural complex with arcade and commercial-residential buildings			Yide Road, Renmin South Road, Daxin Road	
Large commercial building			Yide Road	

Continued Table 3-3 Summary of Building Types in Zhuangyuanfang District

Non-street-front commercial-residential building (Bamboo tube house)			streets and alleys at all levels	Live Retail
Row-type multi-story residential building			Tiancheng Road, Zhuangyuanfang, Yanguang Street, Xianleli	Live Public Facilities

3.5 Social Network in Zhuangyuanfang Neighborhood

3.5.1 Neighborhood Interaction Network

The original neighborhood network of Zhuangyuanfang was formed through long-term cohabitation among elderly residents. With deteriorating living conditions, some original residents moved out, leading to increased vacant housing. While the northern part of the block still retains residential communities and neighborly relationships, population aging has resulted in superficial social interactions. The southern area, highly commercialized, has seen original residents replaced by transient commercial populations. Most buildings have been converted into warehouses, eliminating residential spaces and nearly erasing neighborhood engagement. The block has thus degenerated from a cohesive community into a temporary residential zone.

3.5.2 Business Collaboration Network

The commercial collaboration network represents the most distinctive indigenous social network in historical commercial districts like Zhuangyuanfang. Emerging alongside the development of the Thirteen Factories 'foreign trade, it forms a symbiotic business ecosystem centered on Guangzhou embroidery and theatrical costume production, characterized by integrated upstream-downstream operations, mutual business support, and industry self-regulation. This network also serves as the core endogenous driving force behind the district's commercial vitality.

(1) The original business entities are nearly extinct, with the entire industrial chain completely disrupted.

During the golden age of the neighborhood, only four core businesses remained in Guangzhou embroidery and theatrical costume production: two intangible cultural heritage master studios and two family-run traditional costume workshops. All practitioners were veteran artisans aged 60 or older, operating on a minimal scale that failed to establish a complete industrial ecosystem. The original supporting industries — including silk fabric processing, bead embroidery techniques, and prop manufacturing—had all relocated. Only a handful of handicraft workshops still needed to coordinate with external supply chains across regions, maintaining no industrial collaboration with local merchants within the neighborhood.

(2) Complete replacement of business entities and complete dissolution of commercial collaboration relationships

The commercial formats of the block are predominantly characterized by low-end garment wholesale and warehousing logistics, with most operators being external merchants. These businesses operate in isolation and lack industrial chain integration, often facing intense homogenized competition. Relying on the block's low-cost spatial resources for cross-regional wholesale operations, these merchants exhibit minimal deep integration with the block ecosystem, demonstrate insufficient long-term planning, and show limited willingness for collaboration. Consequently, the foundational basis for symbiotic commercial networks has been eroded.

(3) The symbiotic commercial-residential neighborhood relationship network has completely collapsed

The original commercial ecosystem has lost its dual connection where local merchants and neighborhood residents were "both neighbors and core customer groups." Today's wholesale businesses primarily serve external procurement clients, with minimal interaction with local residents. The remaining convenience stores only meet basic needs of elderly residents, lacking stable customer relationships with merchants. This has completely dismantled the original symbiotic model of "supporting residential life through commerce and revitalizing commerce through residential vitality."

3.5.3 Community Management District

The Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood in Guangzhou is administratively overseen by the Zhuangyuanfang Community Residents Committee under Renmin Subdistrict, Yuexiu District. Its community management framework exemplifies the typical governance model of Guangzhou's historic old urban districts, characterized by "vertical hierarchical administrative control as the primary approach, supplemented by horizontal multi-stakeholder collaboration"

in a government-led governance system (Table 3-4).

Table 3-4 Social Management Network Hierarchical Structure

Source: author

Top class	Core subject
top-level coordination	The People's Government of Yuexiu District, Guangzhou City, along with district-level functional departments including the District Culture and Tourism Bureau, Housing and Urban-Rural Development Bureau, Urban Management and Law Enforcement Bureau, Market Supervision and Administration Bureau, and Fire Rescue Brigade
Middle management execution	Yuexiu District People's Sub-district Office
Grassroots implementation	Zhuangyuanfang Community Residents Committee
Peripheral accessibility	Community Basic Grid and Full-time Grid Workers

3.6 Summary of This Chapter

This chapter systematically analyzes the current local characteristics of Zhuangyuanfang district from four dimensions: historical context, distinctive business formats, spatial features, and social networks, combined with field research. The local issues faced by Zhuangyuanfang Street are summarized into the following four aspects, providing a research foundation for subsequent strategic design:

Historically, the area's culture surrounding top scholars and the imperial examinations is merely reflected in visual symbols like archways and sculptures, failing to integrate into business operations and spaces. The core cultural heritage has become severely symbolized and hollowed out. Intangible cultural heritage such as Cantonese opera costume making and Guangxi embroidery have become disconnected from the area's development. There are no related workshops or exhibition/experience spaces within the area, and a lack of supportive policies, depriving these traditional crafts of the soil for local growth. The centuries-old local culture is gradually disappearing; the area's cultural soul is gone, leaving only static architectural shells.

Regarding distinctive business formats, Zhuangyuanfang district's industrial foundation and core identity lie in traditional handicrafts such as Cantonese opera costumes, Guangxiu embroidery, and gold and silver jewelry. However, after industrial relocation and business transformation, traditional handicrafts are now almost extinct, and intangible cultural heritage skills have lost their original space and soil for inheritance, resulting in a break in the local character of the industry. The business transformation after the reform and opening up failed

to leverage the street's cultural characteristics, was eroded by the peripheral effect of Yide Road's traditional wholesale commerce, and became a cluster of wholesale warehouses. With the rise of e-commerce, it lost its advantage. Currently, the business formats lack local characteristics and differentiated competitiveness, are disconnected from historical context, and are difficult to sustain.

In terms of spatial characteristics, Zhuangyuanfang Street's "main street-inner alley" layout and bamboo-tube houses are hallmarks of Lingnan commercial districts. However, the historical buildings have suffered from disrepair and improper renovations, damaging their original character, while high-rise commercial development has torn apart their structure. Originally a vibrant hub of local life and commerce, the area has now lost its vitality, with declining business activity and alleyways reduced to passive freight and storage spaces, resulting in a loss of public space. The traditional mixed-use commercial and residential function of "shops below, residences above, front shops, back workshops" is its core feature; however, residential and commercial functions have declined, while warehousing and vacancy rates have increased, with large areas converted into warehouses or left idle. The original symbiotic system of "commerce-residence-production" has collapsed, and vitality has been lost.

On the social network, the original inhabitants continue to leave, leading to a complete hollowing out of the social structure. The area has lost its core of local life, and its local culture and lifestyle have lost their living heritage, becoming a "historical space without a subject." The original and vital commercial cooperation network has also been completely dissolved due to its original business model, resulting in the collapse of the entire upstream and downstream industrial chain. The property rights of the houses in the neighborhood are extremely fragmented and some are unclear. The willingness of the property owners and users to renovate the neighborhood is unclear, and grassroots-led renewal cannot be promoted from the bottom up.

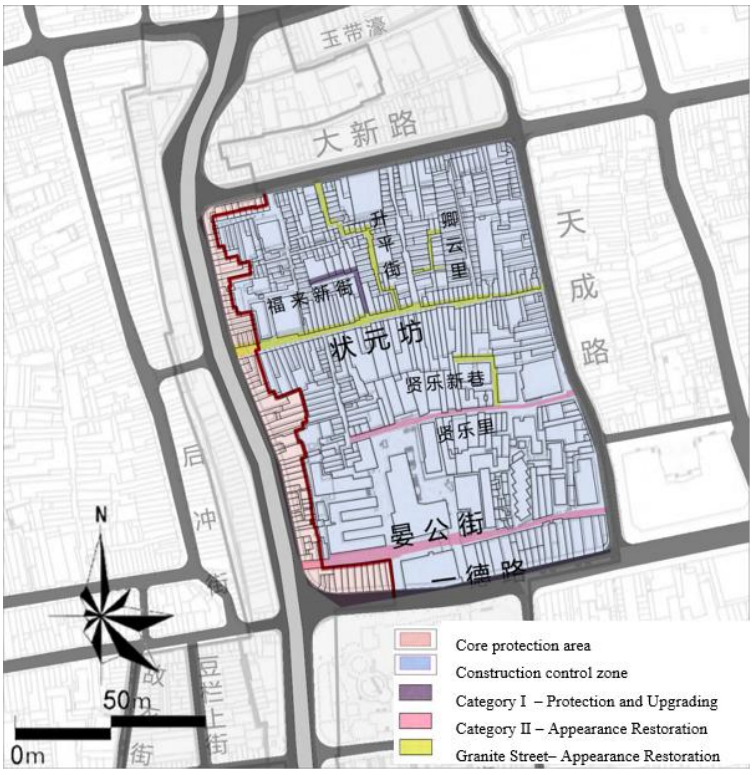
Chapter 4 Renewal Strategies for Zhuangyuanfang District

4.1 Conservation Requirements for Zhuangyuanfang District

4.1.1 Protection Scope and Traditional Alleys

Over 90% of Zhuangyuanfang Block lies within the construction control zone, with only the western section along Renmin South Road Arcade Street, along with a small portion of Yide Road on the south side and Daxin Road Arcade Street on the north side, falling within the core protection area.

Urban planning mandates a hierarchical conservation strategy (Figure 4-1, Table 4-1) for the district's historic fabric, categorizing streets to ensure tailored preservation. Category I streets (e.g., Fulai New Street) and Arcade streets are subject to strict controls, prohibiting widening and requiring the absolute maintenance of original alignments, height-to-width ratios, and continuous structural facades. Category II streets, including Zhuangyuanfang, focus on phased efforts to harmonize traditional architecture with modern aesthetics. Central to this framework is the preservation of the 13 protected cobblestone streets, where authentic materials and traditional techniques are prioritized to maintain or progressively restore historical stone surfaces, thereby safeguarding the district's distinct spatial and material heritage.



Source: author furthered by literature[120]

Figure 4-1 Protection Scope of Zhuangyuanfang Block and Traditional Streets

Table 4-1 Protection Types and Requirements for Streets and Alleys in Zhuangyuanfang

Source: author furthered by literature[120]

Street type	Protection requirement	Street names
Category I of Traditional Streets and Alleys	Protection enhancement	Fulai New Street
Category II Traditional Alleys	Appearance restoration	Yan Gong Street
		Xianleli
Granite Street		Zhuangyuanfang
		Shengping Street
		Xianle New Street
		Qingyunli

4.1.2 Requirements for Activation Utilization and Cultural Heritage Preservation

Renmin South Historical District Protection Plan outlines the revitalization strategy for Zhuangyuanfang area. The district should leverage its historical and cultural heritage sites along with the historic shops lining both sides of Zhuangyuanfang for adaptive reuse and exhibition purposes, highlighting its distinctive commercial and handicraft history centered on traditional theatrical costume industries. The plan emphasizes preserving and encouraging street-side commercial activities while maintaining authentic commercial ambiance, promoting mixed-use architectural functions and integrated development of commercial spaces, homestays, residential areas, and cultural creative offices to enhance neighborhood vibrancy and multifunctionality. Priority should be given to core industries including premium apparel, fashion design, cultural creative offices, art galleries, and garment retail sectors. The proportion of low-end wholesale and warehousing facilities within the district should be gradually reduced. Additionally, supporting industries such as dining and entertainment can be appropriately expanded. Through renovation of small-scale buildings, the plan aims to create a distinctive, large-scale fashion cultural district with unique architectural styles[120].

The initiative requires revitalizing traditional architecture within Zhuangyuanfang by adding theatrical costume exhibition facilities and enhancing the neighborhood's intangible cultural heritage (ICH) and industrial culture display system. Through multiple approaches including historic building restoration, adaptive reuse of structures, historical space reconstruction, installation of sculptural panels, and ICH-themed events, the project aims to promote the cultural legacy of Lingnan celebrities centered around Zhang Zhensun, the renowned imperial examination champion.

4.1.3 Supporting Facilities and Environmental Improvement Requirements

The "Protection Plan for Renminnan Historical District" requires optimization of the pedestrian infrastructure in Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood, with a focus on enhancing the walking environment. This includes rational placement of pavement materials, rest facilities, street furniture, and guidance systems. Additionally, a youth activity center will be established within Zhuangyuanfang without occupying separate land, while improving public cultural service facilities in the area.

4.2 Case Analysis

4.2.1 Historic District Renovation of Jiangmen Changdi

As a central city in the western Pearl River Delta, Jiangmen possesses a heritage dating back to the Yuan and Ming dynasties. The Changdi Historical District (Figure 4-2) on the Peng River serves as the city’ s cultural core, preserving a 700-year spatial trajectory and distinctive Lingnan lifestyle. Featuring key landmarks like Xuding Market and traditional arcade districts, Changdi maintains its original Qing and Republican-era architectural texture despite modern transformations. This well-preserved integration of natural and cultural landscapes—including sites associated with figures like Chen Baisha—stands as a premier example of organic urban heritage and a vital repository of Lingnan history[2].



Source: Literature[2]

Figure 4-2 Scope of Jiangmen Changdi Historic District

4.2.1.1 Spatial Form Conservation and Renewal

(1) Development of Street System and Public Space

The distinctive street network (Figure 4-3a) within historical districts serves as the

fundamental framework shaping their spatial morphology, while also functioning as a vital transportation hub connecting internal and external areas. Urban renewal projects must strike a balanced approach between preserving traditional district scales, road configurations, and modern transportation systems, alongside meeting safety and lifestyle requirements for daily life and production activities. This requires effective protection of the historical urban spatial structure and architectural character, while ensuring functional rationality and enhanced convenience in urban development.

The planning and design of street spaces (Figure 4-3b) should integrate the unique characteristics of historical districts, prioritizing pedestrian and non-motorized transportation within the area while implementing effective maintenance and optimization for historically significant streets and alleys. Concurrently, by enhancing and restoring the original street structures, reasonable motor vehicle usage can be ensured within specific zones and timeframes. Additionally, efforts should focus on revitalizing landscapes that organically blend natural scenery with the street system, creating harmonious pedestrian environments.

Traditional buildings within urban districts feature compact bays with generous depth, while characteristic alleyways maintain comfortable spatial dimensions that create a cohesive urban fabric. Preservation efforts should respect the natural textures of Shiwan Straight Street and its narrow lanes, safeguarding and enhancing traditional street spaces while exploring their latent value. This approach highlights the authentic character of historic districts, strengthens the distinctive urban spatial identity, and fosters community belongingness and social cohesion. New constructions in these areas must avoid disrupting the historical district's overall aesthetic and alleyway patterns, instead integrating seamlessly with existing spatial configurations to maintain harmonious continuity.





Source: Literature[2]

Figure 4-3a Schematic diagram of road traffic planning

Figure 4-3b Schematic diagram of public space opening system

(2) Reconstruction of Local Cultural Field

By fully leveraging Wuyi cultural resources including overseas Chinese communities and traditional markets within the Changdi Historical and Cultural District, this initiative systematically organizes public spaces while integrating distinctive cultural experiences to create localized cultural hubs, revitalizing declining public areas in the neighborhood. The case categorizes the entire Changdi area into four thematic cultural zones (Figure 4-4) based on spatial configuration, architectural style, and historical building characteristics: Arcade Architecture Zone, Market Square Architecture Zone, Modern Overseas Chinese Residential Architecture Zone, and Shiwan Architecture Zone.

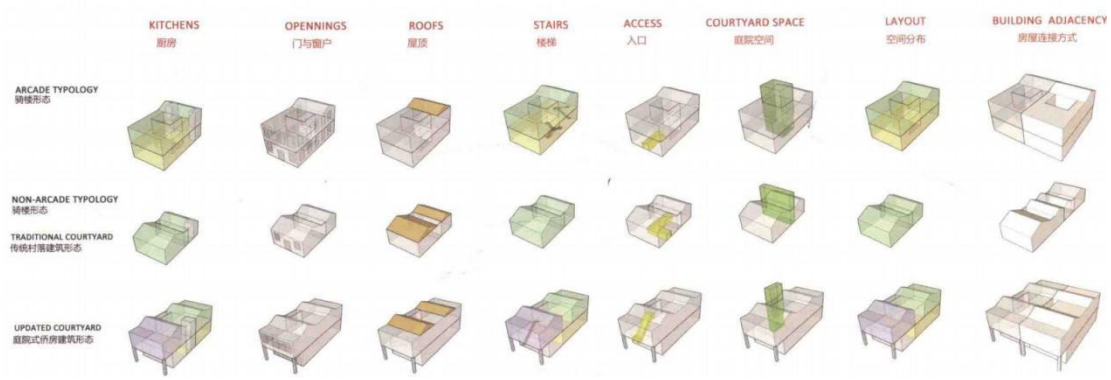


Source: Literature[2]

Figure 4-4 Distribution map of Changdi historic district features

(3) Conservation and Renovation of Historic Architectural Features

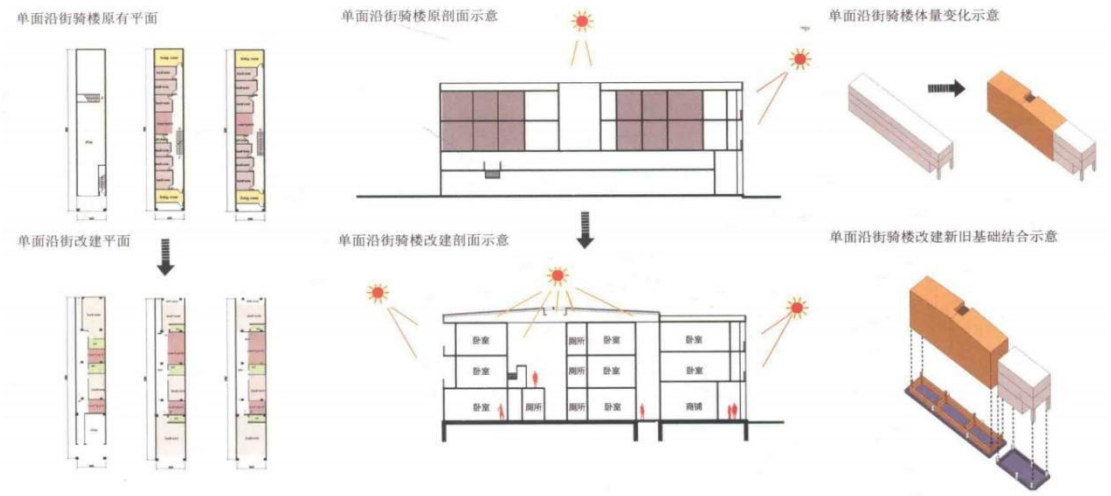
Regarding the conservation and renewal of arcade street architecture, this case study conducts a typological analysis of various functional spaces within arcades (Figure4-5) , examining their morphological characteristics, structural configurations, and spatial connections between buildings. By identifying the spatial features inherent to local contexts, the research facilitates adaptive interior renovations. While preserving original local characteristics, the study reconfigures internal spaces by replacing conventional functional areas to accommodate both commercial and residential activities.



Source: Literature[2]

Figure 4-5 Typological Study on Arcade Architecture in the Changdi Historic District

The single-sided arcade buildings along the street retain the traditional "commercial space below, residential space above" functional layout. The interior design has shortened the length of traffic-carrying cold aisles, creating more usable space. While preserving the original spatial division, the interior small rooms arranged in single rows have been consolidated. Partial wall structures were removed to form courtyard spaces, optimizing natural lighting and ventilation within the arcade architecture (Figure 4-6).



Source: Literature[2]

Figure 4-6 Schematic reconstruction of arcade in the Changdi Historic District

4.1.1.2 Regional Cultural Revival

Jiangmen boasts a rich and diverse historical and cultural heritage. Its long history has fostered profound cultural accumulation, with temple fair culture, theatrical and folk art culture, educational culture emphasizing schooling, culinary culture, and religious culture serving as representative elements of local traditions. These outstanding and inheritable regional cultures are deeply rooted in the core Changdi Historical and Cultural District of

Jiangmen.

(1) Cultural Venue Network and Accessibility

The study does not treat the Changdi Historical and Cultural Block as an isolated district, but rather integrates it into Jiangmen's cultural context by coordinating with other historical and cultural areas to enhance connectivity and accessibility between cultural zones. By improving transportation links and establishing a well-defined pedestrian network, all cultural spaces are seamlessly integrated into a cohesive whole.

2) Hybrid Function Development

Through in-depth exploration and focused development of historical-cultural resources within the district, we aim to transform it into a showcase area for Jiangmen's cultural heritage. The strategy emphasizes small-scale, diversified cultural commerce featuring themed markets, folk crafts exhibitions, creative fairs, specialty food streets, antique galleries, traditional workshops, gourmet dining venues, leisure facilities, and family-friendly lodgings. Cultural landmarks such as overseas Chinese associations and historical museums will be strategically integrated to create multifunctional public spaces for community engagement. By leveraging cultural revitalization, we will enhance residential environments while preserving original living functions, ultimately restoring authentic urban living experiences.

(2) Introduction of cultural facilities, cultural industries, and cultural activities

The old city's image will be enhanced through the development of a' cultural flagship project. 'At the entrance of Shiwan Straight Street, a themed market square will be transformed into the Shiwan Straight Street Historical and Folk Museum District, serving as a showcase for Jiangmen's origins and a platform to highlight overseas Chinese culture through diverse approaches.

By establishing overseas Chinese associations, we strengthen ties with overseas Chinese communities and organize diverse exchange programs including tourism initiatives, summer camps, business collaborations, and investment opportunities. Through hosting cultural events, we enhance the impact of cultural resources on urban development. Leveraging market-oriented approaches, we actively attract social capital to position cultural and creative industries as key drivers for urban economic revitalization.

Make full use of local folk resources, integrate the organization of folk festivals and cultural activities, combine daily activities with regular events and large-scale events, to stimulate residents' sense of pride and confidence, benefit local residents, and contribute to the development of Jiangmen.

4.2.1.3 Real Estate Industry and Population Structure Adjustment

(1) Improve overall environmental quality to attract both local and non-local residents

The initiative focuses on enhancing waterfront environments and commercial ecosystems to boost neighborhood vitality. It strengthens land-use planning for commercial services in Canghou Subdistrict and surrounding areas, amplifies commercial clustering effects within designated zones, and increases the appeal of commercial activity flows. These measures will drive economic and social development both within the subdistrict and across the region. Additionally, efforts will improve living conditions in historic urban areas, retain local residents, and mitigate population outflow trends.

(2) Enhancing the attractiveness of cultural and educational resources to migrant populations

Make full use of cultural and educational resources within the planning area, collaborate with overseas Chinese communities in cultural and educational sectors, and enhance the appeal to migrant populations.

(3) Integration of cultural tourism development with the tertiary industry

By integrating cultural and tourism resources into the development of tertiary industries within historical districts, we can enhance the quality of cultural tourism services while creating more local employment opportunities.

4.2.2 Renovation of Ichiban Street in Kawagoe City, Japan

Located in Kawagoe City, Saitama Prefecture, Kawagoe Ichiban Street (Figure 4-7) forms the core district of the historic Kawagoe area, often referred to as the "Little Edo." Stretching 430 meters in length, this area features approximately 70 shops centered around traditional black plastered plaster construction techniques rebuilt after the Great Kawagoe Fire in 1893 (Meiji 26). It stands as a benchmark case for Japanese historical district preservation and urban renewal. The renewal strategy emphasizes bottom-up community-led governance and multi-stakeholder collaboration, rooted in historical preservation to achieve a symbiotic relationship between commercial revitalization, cultural heritage, and livable environments—rather than large-scale demolition and commercial development. This approach has resulted in a progressive renewal practice spanning half a century.

4.2.2.1 Resident-led Collaborative Governance Mechanism

The revitalization of Kawagoe Ichiban Street has completely transformed the traditional model of "government-led initiatives with passive resident participation," establishing a

governance framework characterized by "business-led initiatives, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and equal rights and responsibilities." The core implementing entities for this renewal initiative are civil self-governance organizations in Kawagoe, including the Ichiban Street Commercial Collaboration Group, the Town Integration Committee, and the Kawagoe Sōno Association, which jointly oversee decision-making and execution processes[122].

Throughout the urban renewal process, Kawagoe City Government has consistently adhered to the principle of "neither overstepping nor neglecting responsibilities." Its core mission involves providing institutional, financial, and technical support rather than directly intervening in neighborhood decision-making. Specific measures include: offering operational funding subsidies to neighborhood development committees, dispatching staff as observers to participate in meetings; formulating supporting landscape regulations and preserving regional conservation rules to establish legal safeguards for community-led initiatives; applying for national and prefectural grant funds while implementing local subsidy policies to finance renovation projects; and coordinating infrastructure upgrades to address municipal engineering projects beyond the capacity of private entities.



Source: Internet

Figure 4-7 Realistic photos of Ichiban Street in Kawagoe City

4.2.2.2 Authenticity Restoration of Spatial Interfaces

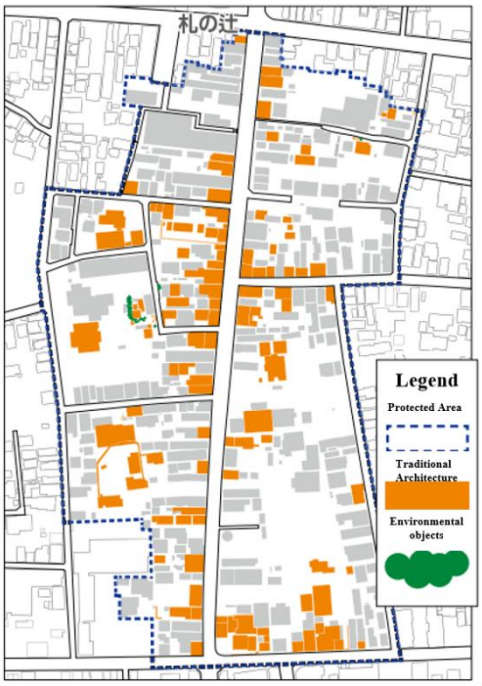
The "Kawagoe Ichiban Street District Construction Standards" enacted in 1988 marked Japan's first landscape management regulations for historic districts independently developed by the public. Comprising 67 clauses divided into urban planning and architectural design sections, its defining feature is "propositional guidance rather than mandatory prohibitions."

Key provisions include:

Architectural Control: The building height shall be capped at the block landmark "Time Clock" (11 meters) to preserve the skyline integrity. Exterior facades must prioritize natural materials and local construction components, with core architectural elements such as black plaster (Figure 4-8b) exterior walls and lattice windows of traditional buildings remaining unchanged. New constructions and renovations must harmonize with surrounding structures in scale, color, and material composition, emphasizing the dominant role of traditional architecture.

Spatial Management: The initiative promotes "work-residence integration" by encouraging shops to retain residential functions on upper floors, preventing nighttime vacancy in neighborhoods. It protects small green spaces and pocket parks within districts while optimizing pedestrian walkways. Clear guidelines are established regarding the design, dimensions, and materials of signs, awnings, and outdoor facilities, prohibiting large modern billboards that could disrupt the urban landscape.

Review mechanism: All renovation and decoration plans for shops must first undergo review by the town committee. The committee provides guidance from the design phase rather than imposing penalties ex post, thereby minimizing renovation costs for merchants and ensuring the effective implementation of regulatory standards.





Source: Literature[122]

Figure 4-8a Conservation planning for traditional architecture on Ichiban Street

Figure 4-8b Schematic diagram of exterior appearance with black plastering

4.2.2.3 Commercial and Cultural Tourism Revitalization Strategies Centered on Local Culture

(1) Business model optimization through "preservation of traditional formats + cultivation of distinctive formats"

The neighborhood has not completely replaced its original business formats for tourism purposes, but instead developed a diversified structure combining "local lifestyle businesses + traditional time-honored brands + distinctive cultural tourism offerings." On one hand, it retains essential services catering to local residents—such as fresh food stores, pharmacies, daily necessities shops, and barbershops—to preserve the neighborhood's authentic "lifelike atmosphere" and prevent over-tourism. On the other hand, it supports and cultivates traditional businesses rooted in Kawagoe's local culture, including wagashi shops, sake breweries, traditional craft stores, and Edo-period specialty restaurants, thereby creating unique commercial characteristics. Simultaneously, it ensures that cultural innovation, coffee shops, and experiential businesses adhere to neighborhood aesthetic standards, blending seamlessly with traditional architectural spaces to avoid modern developments disrupting the community ambiance.

(2) IP development and festival operations centered on local culture

Centered around the "Little Edo Kawagoe" as its core IP, the district has deeply explored local historical and cultural resources (Figure4-9) to establish a sustainable festival system. Annually during summer, it hosts the "Takizo Light Show," while winter features an Edo-period themed New Year's market. These events are complemented by district-wide activities integrated with the Kawagoe Festival—one of Japan's three major extraordinary festivals. All initiatives are independently planned and co-participated by local businesses, with partial funding support from the government. These celebrations have significantly boosted visitor traffic and regional recognition. In 1986, Kawagoe City recorded only 2.32 million annual tourists, but by 2008 this figure had surpassed 6 million, with approximately 90% of visitors making a stop at the shopping district.

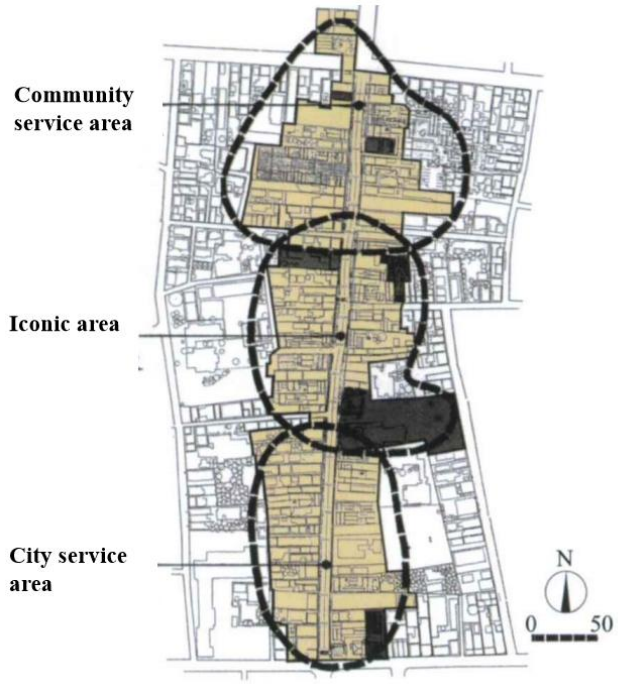


Source: Literature[122]

Figure 4-9 Local Cultural and Tourism Resources of Ogawa-Kawagoe

(3) Integrated Cultural and Tourism Spaces

The development centers around Ichiban Street, integrating surrounding cultural tourism resources such as Time Clock, Kashiwabashi Confectionery Alley, Taisho Romantic Dream Avenue, Kawagoe Jobonmaru Palace, and Kitagawa-in, forming a cohesive historical and cultural sightseeing route (Figure 4-10). The government has constructed supporting facilities including a tourist distribution center, dedicated parking lots, and Kawagoe Festival Hall around the area, effectively addressing the historical district's limited visitor capacity. This initiative has established a model where "the core district drives comprehensive cultural tourism development across the entire region."



Source: Literature [122]

Figure 4-10 Schematic Diagram of Tourism and Cultural Space Integration

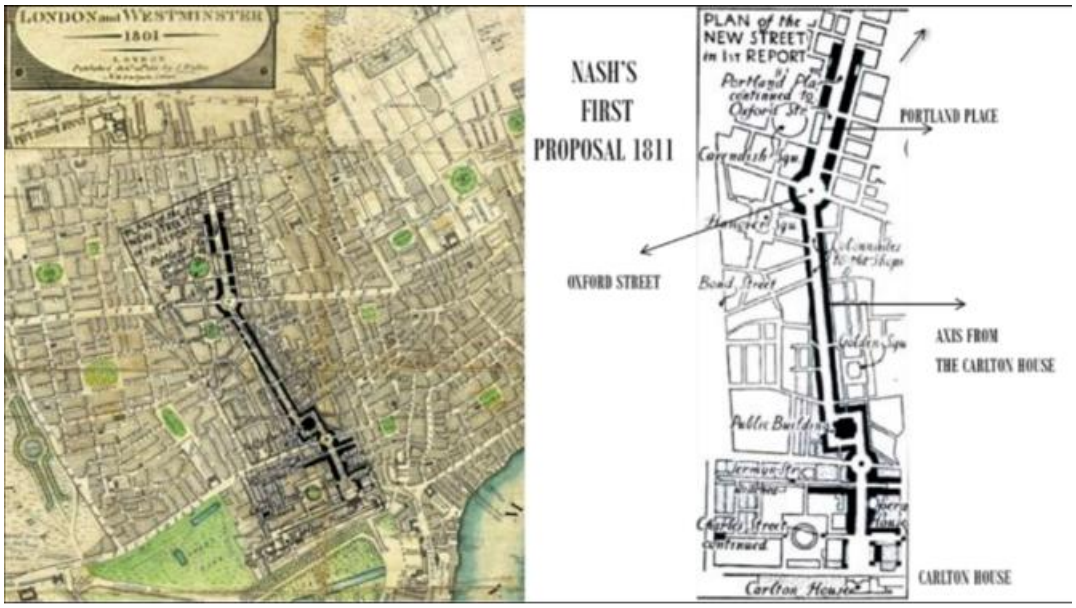
4.3.3 Regent Street Renewal Design in London, UK

Regent Street, a world-class commercial landmark at the heart of London's West End, was designed by architect John Nash in 1811 and fully completed in 1825. As Britain's earliest comprehensive urban renewal project and a benchmark for European classical urban planning, its 200-year revitalization journey has consistently adhered to core principles: preserving historical continuity, maintaining spatial integrity, adapting functional flexibility, and prioritizing public value. This approach has established a unique urban renewal paradigm that harmonizes heritage conservation with commercial revitalization, while integrating long-term governance strategies with phased development initiatives.

4.3.3.1 Spatial Form Renewal

(1) Continuation of spatial pattern

Adhering steadfastly to the north-south core axis established in the 1811 plan connecting Regent's Park and St. James's Square (Figure4-11), the project links London's West End ecological spaces with two major urban hubs—Piccadilly Circus and Oxford Circus—through meandering street patterns. This approach not only achieves structural integration of urban spaces but also establishes the neighborhood's irreplaceable locational value[102].



Source: Literature [102]

Figure 4-11 Spatial Pattern of Regent Street

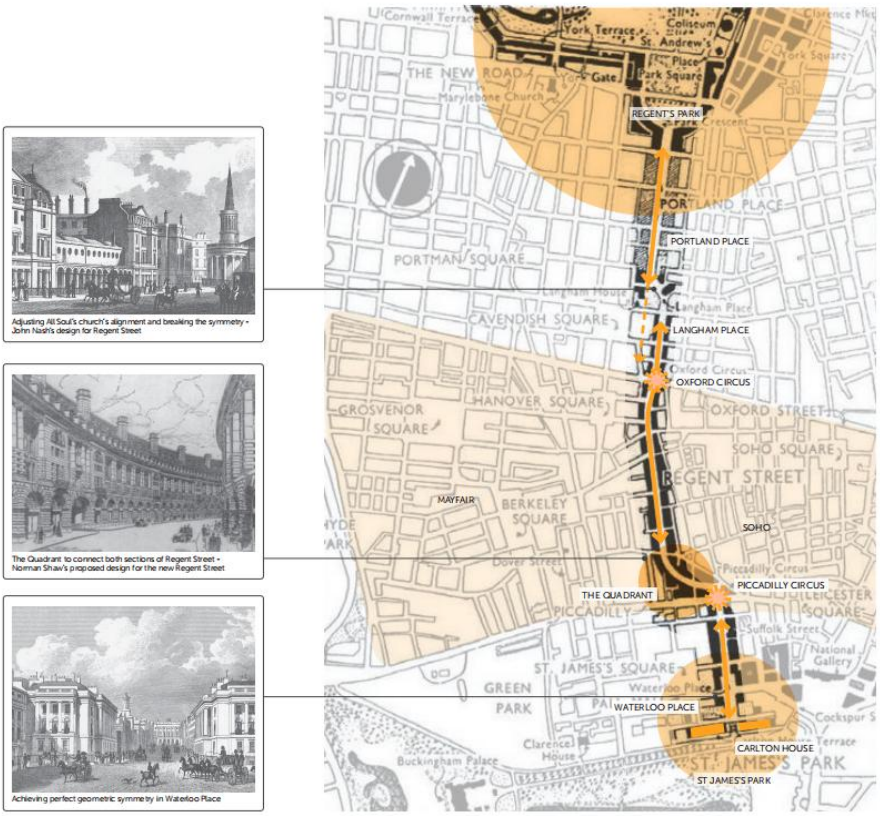
(2)Functional zoning design

Regent Street is divided into distinct sections, such as Lower Regent Street, the Quadrant, and Upper Regent Street (Figure 4-12), each with its own function and attraction. This zoning helps distribute pedestrian traffic and prevents overcrowding in any single area, maintaining an orderly flow throughout the entire street.

(3)Node Construction and Visual Guidance

Regent Street features carefully placed intersections and junctions that use curved and circular connections to guide pedestrian traffic between different areas. These points act as hubs that facilitate movement between sections of the street, reducing interruptions and serving as nodes where people can transition smoothly.

The symmetrical and uniform facades of the buildings create a cohesive visual experience that draws pedestrians forward. This continuous architectural style and storefront arrangement encourage people to keep moving along the street rather than gathering in one spot for too long[103].



Source: Literature[127]

Figure 4-12 Schematic diagram of spatial nodes and visual guidance on Regent Street

(4)Street Space Design

Regent Street features wide sidewalks that provide ample walking space for pedestrians, facilitating smooth passage. The spacious walkways reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, enhancing safety and comfort. This design aims to attract high-end shoppers and tourists while creating a pleasant social environment.

Regent Street was designed to curve eastward (FIgure 4-13) between Oxford Street and Piccadilly Circus, bypassing St. James's Square, while the circular road ensures visual continuity. Nash employed curves to connect different sections, avoiding monotony and creating a more engaging pedestrian experience. This fluid design makes the street more captivating and vibrant.



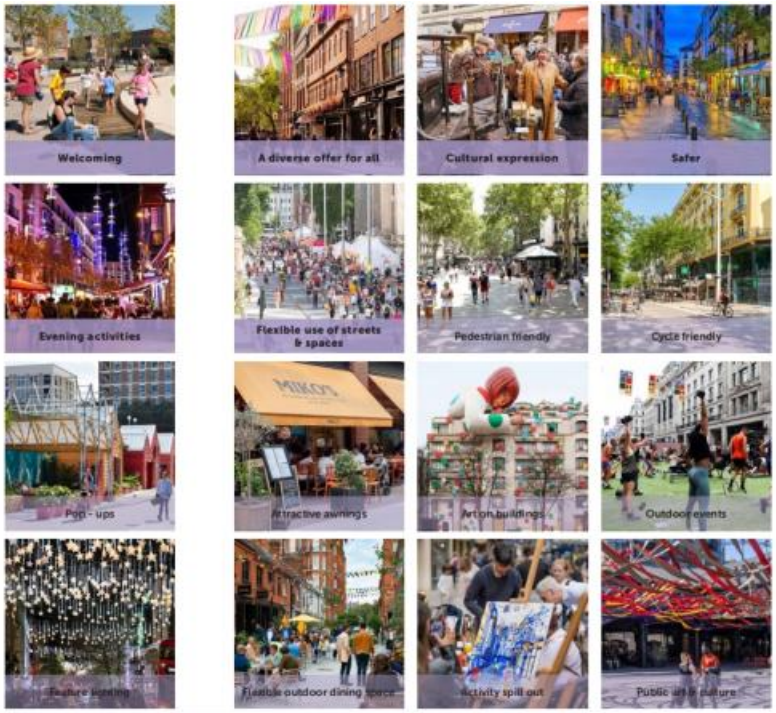
Source: author furthered, based on internet

Figure 4-13 Typical cross-section and circular design of Regent Street

4.3.3.2 Business Model Renewal Strategy

The business format renewal of Regent Street has consistently centered on 'consolidating its status as a world-class premium commercial destination.' Through precise format management and iterative optimization, it adapts to evolving consumer trends and commercial competition across different eras, thereby achieving long-term stability in the district's commercial value[105].

During the neighborhood renewal initiative launched by the UK's Royal Estate Agency in 2002, the core brand positioning of "quality, heritage, style, and success" was established alongside a stringent brand admission mechanism (Figure 4-14) The program prioritized introducing flagship stores of international luxury brands and British classic brands, while strictly limiting homogeneous fast-fashion brands and low-end commercial formats. This approach created a differentiated advantage through the formation of a "flagship store cluster."



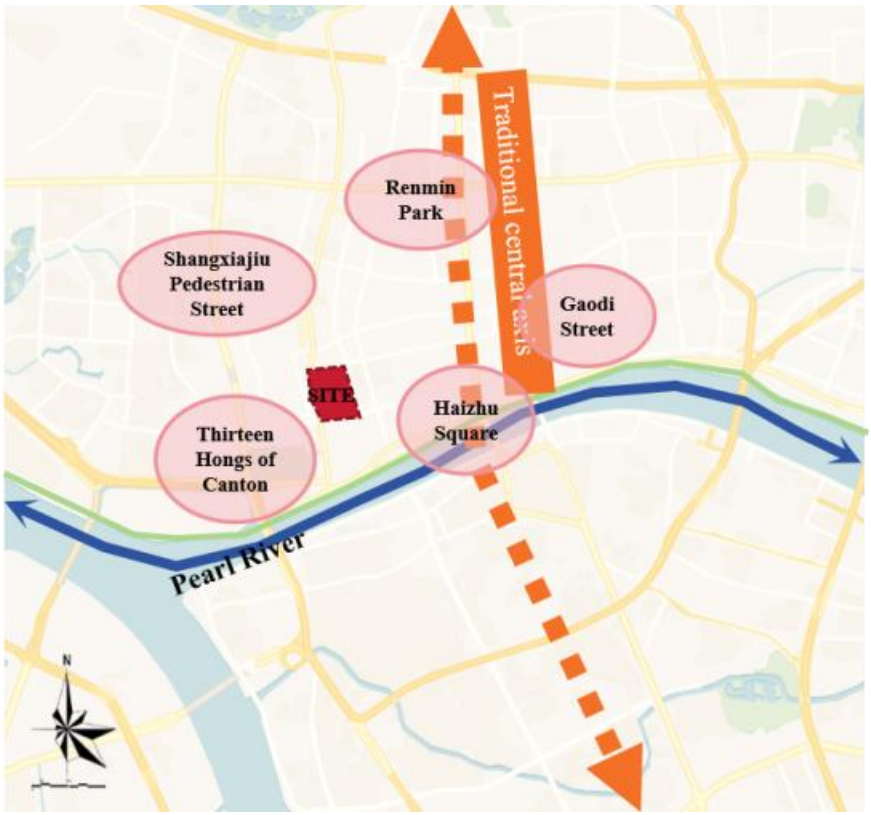
Source: Literature[127]

Figure 4-14 Schematic diagram of business format renewal

4.3 Inheritance of Indigenous Cultural Genes

4.3.1 Construction of a Network for Local Cultural Sites

Capitalizing on the geographical advantages of Zhuangyuanfang District, it is integrated into the overarching cultural framework of Guangzhou's Xiguan Cantonese Cultural Core Area. Through optimized slow traffic systems, enhanced pedestrian accessibility, and thematic cultural synergy, spatial and content connections with surrounding cultural venues are established to construct a regional cultural linkage network characterized by "one core, three corridors, and multiple nodes" (Figure 4-15).



Source: author

Figure 4-15 Cultural Location of Zhuangyuanfang District

Centered around Zhuangyuanfang District, the initiative strategically integrates three cultural threads: Firstly, westward connecting with the Thirteen Factories Historical and Cultural District through its De Road commercial hub, linking the foreign trade heritage of the Thirteen Factories and Cantonese commercial traditions. Secondly, southward linking with Shishi Sacred Heart Cathedral and the riverside historical landscape belt to connect with Guangzhou's Maritime Silk Road cultural legacy. Third, eastward integrating with Guangzhou's traditional central axis to incorporate core elements of Cantonese intangible cultural heritage and Cantonese opera culture.

The pedestrian slow traffic system connecting the block with surrounding cultural nodes will be optimized through a unified cultural signage system (Figure 4-16), improved pavement paving, and street interface renovations. This initiative aims to eliminate pedestrian connectivity bottlenecks at Renmin South Road, Tiancheng Road, and Dade Road intersections, remove obstacles such as motor vehicle lane occupation and street discontinuities, and ensure walking distances between the block and adjacent cultural sites remain within 15 minutes. The project ultimately seeks to establish a closed-loop pedestrian corridor for Cantonese cultural consumption.



Source: Internet

Figure 4-16: Cultural Visual Identity of Yongqingfang

Establish regular content collaboration with surrounding cultural venues to jointly launch the "Cantonese Commercial Intangible Cultural Heritage Tour Route" and "Zhuangyuan Cultural Study Tour Route," achieving shared visitor flows, co-hosted events, and joint brand development. This initiative transforms Zhuangyuan Fang from an isolated old city alley into a vital component of Guangzhou's Xiguan Cantonese Cultural Core Area.

4.3.2 Characteristic Cultural Activities

To revitalize local heritage and address the scarcity of neighborhood programming, a three-tiered cultural framework has been established under the principles of community-led sustainability and long-term integration. By organizing daily events, quarterly themes, and annual festivals, the system transitions from temporary government-led initiatives to an intrinsic driver of neighborhood vitality. This structured approach ensures the dynamic preservation of culture while fostering synergistic growth between community stakeholders and traditional local industries.

4.3.2.1 Routine daily activities

Focusing on the dynamic inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), daily regular cultural activities are held in neighborhood ICH workshops and venues, turning cultural experiences into long-term community features instead of temporary gimmicks.

ICH Experience Program: The Guangzhou Embroidery Costume Workshop offers daily light-intensity courses (Figure 4-17) in 1-hour experiential sessions for tourists and systematic training for enthusiasts. It also holds open days for visitors to watch artisans at work, promoting living inheritance of craftsmanship.

Zhuangyuan Culture Daily Study Programs: The Zhuangyuan Culture Study Base holds daily activities (Writing Opening Ceremony, Imperial Examination Culture Mini-Class,

Classical Chinese Recitation) for adolescents, integrating Zhuangyuan culture with traditional education and making Guangzhou a distinctive study tour destination.

Guangfu Urban Life Daily Scenes: Alley neighborhood spaces host regular community activities like "Neighborhood Morning Tea" and "Cantonese Opera Singing," recreating authentic Guangfu street life and letting local residents be the main participants rather than tourist backgrounds.



Source: Official website of Nantou Ancient City

Figure 4-17 Schematic diagram of characteristic cultural activities in Nantou Ancient City

4.3.2.2 Thematic Quarterly Activities

Centered on the neighborhood's core cultural resources, quarterly themed cultural events are planned to maintain market vitality and nurture local business formats, forming a virtuous cycle of "cultural attraction plus commercial revenue growth."

In spring, the Zhuangyuan Cultural Study Tour Season runs from March to April, including the Writing Ceremony, Zhuangyuan Blessing Ritual, imperial examination culture exhibitions and forums. Cooperating with local schools helps develop a unique imperial examination cultural IP.

In summer, the Guangzhou Embroidery Costume Cultural Festival is held from June to July, with exhibitions, design competitions, inheritor shows and Cantonese opera performances. Partnering with institutions in the Greater Bay Area, it builds a key platform for Lingnan Guangzhou embroidery inheritance and integrates the costume industry with cultural tourism.

In autumn, the Thirteen Factories Commercial Culture Season from September to October features history exhibitions, time-honored brand markets and foreign trade creative fairs, reviving the trade context of the Maritime Silk Road and showcasing Guangzhou's commercial culture.

In winter, the Guangfu Street Culture Season from December to January includes folk markets, retro exhibitions and community story-sharing events. Working with local businesses,

it revives collective memory and creates lively, authentic Guangfu street cultural scenes.

4.3.2.3 Annual Festival Events

By integrating traditional Cantonese festivals, annual cultural events are held to make the neighborhood a key center for inheriting Cantonese folk customs and boost its brand influence.

During the Spring Festival, in cooperation with the Guangfu Temple Fair and Xihu Road Flower Market, Zhuangyuanfang will host an ICH creative flower market and folk market, with lion dances, couplet writing and New Year painting rubbing to revive the festive vibe of old Guangzhou.

For the Dragon Boat Festival, Cantonese opera performances, dragon boat exhibitions and dragon boat-pattern Guangzhou embroidery works will be presented. Working with the Pearl River Dragon Boat Race, it will create a unique folk IP of “Cantonese Opera + Dragon Boat + Guangzhou Embroidery”.

The Mid-Autumn Festival will feature a Cantonese lantern fair, including folk experiences, mooncake making and community banquets, balancing tourist activities and local neighborhood interactions.

In the September back-to-school season, a grand Opening Ceremony will be held for local children, based on the story of Zhang Zhensun, to inherit traditional culture and strengthen Zhuangyuanfang’s core cultural IP.

4.4 Revitalization of Local Characteristic Business Forms

4.4.1 Experiential Commercial Transformation of Traditional Handicrafts

(1) Develop a core experience zone along the main street and establish an open exhibition window

The street-facing storage spaces on Zhuangyuanfang Main Street will be repurposed to support Guangzhou embroidery artisans, traditional opera costume makers and related experiential businesses, forming a core cultural heritage experience zone. The original enclosed roller-shutter storage areas will be transformed into fully transparent glass facades, reviving the traditional "front exhibition, rear workshop" layout: street-facing sections for display and reception, and rear sections as creative workshops. This allows passersby to witness the entire embroidery and costume-making process, turning craft-making into an immersive experience and integrating commercial display with living heritage preservation harmoniously.

(2) Layout dynamic workshop clusters in streets and alleys to create immersive

experience scenarios

By repurposing vacant residential and storage units in Xianleli and Youbu Alley, the neighborhood will establish a cluster of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) workshops. This integrated model features tiered experiences: introductory workshops for tourists (e.g., embroidery pendants), systematic training for enthusiasts (e.g., tailoring), and dedicated studios for master inheritors. By offering hands-on programs and bespoke services, the strategy creates a synergistic flow where "main streets attract visitors while alleyways provide immersive cultural depth," revitalizing the district's traditional craftsmanship through sustainable, modern engagement.

(3) Revitalizing idle cultural heritage sites and public buildings to establish cultural exhibition spaces and public platforms

The revitalization of No.140 Renmin South Road transformed a vacant municipal heritage building into the Zhuangyuanfang ICH Exhibition Hall, strictly following conservation standards. The facility integrates historical displays of Guangzhou embroidery and theatrical costumes with digital and permanent galleries, effectively activating idle heritage assets. Coupled with public space renewal, the project introduced themed landscape installations and interpretive signage at key nodes, successfully converting the neighborhood into an open-air museum that showcases traditional handicrafts to the public.

4.4.2 Introduction of Supporting Commercial Facilities to Meet Community Needs

(1) Construction of a business format system that balances convenience attributes with external experience

Instead of adopting simplistic models such as basic convenience services or internet-famous cultural tourism, the community commercial formats follow the principle of “basic formats as support, distinctive formats as core”. It builds a business ecosystem that satisfies daily living needs and provides unique experiential value, complementing the intangible cultural heritage commerce on the main street.

Basic convenience businesses are set at key entrances of residential areas like Xianle New Street and Tiancheng Road, accessible within a 3-minute walk. Priority is given to essential services including fresh food stores, repair shops, courier stations and designated medical insurance pharmacies, meeting daily needs and securing a stable local customer base.

Distinctive community businesses serve as the core. Referencing small-scale, owner-run urban community cafes with strong local character, they are located in quiet alleys such as Youbu Lane and Xianleli. Renovated from small warehouses and idle bamboo tube houses,

they feature localized coffee and light food shops, ICH-themed bookstores, cultural innovation spaces and community tea rooms, balancing local service and external attraction.

(2) Creating Community-Based Commercial Experience Scenarios

For bamboo tube houses and traditional residential buildings serving community commerce, we strictly adhere to historical district preservation requirements through micro-renovation approaches. This methodology preserves the architectural layout, granite-stone street textures, and Lingnan architectural characteristics while avoiding destructive large-scale demolition. Key optimizations include improving natural lighting and ventilation systems, transforming enclosed storage spaces into open commercial facades, and retaining traditional elements like inner courtyards and sky wells. The design creates a progressive spatial hierarchy of "streets-shops-inner courtyards," establishing seamless transitions from public streets to semi-private rest areas that enhance the tranquil experience amidst urban vibrancy. Additionally, pedestrian circulation optimization integrates flexible buffer zones, small greenery clusters, and seating areas along commercial corridors, fostering a relaxed, life-infused street ambiance distinct from the fast-paced flow of main thoroughfares.

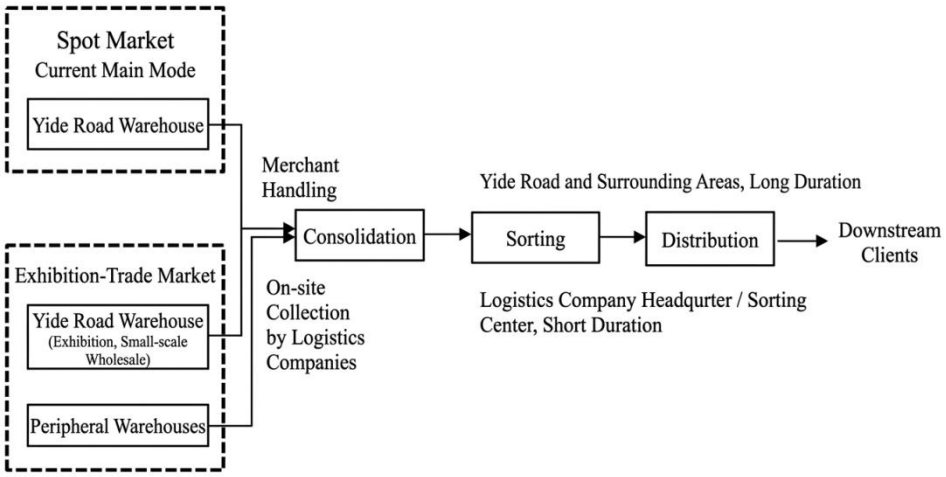
4.4.3 Improvement of Traditional Business Models

(1) Integration of spot markets and exhibition-trade markets to enhance product brand strength

The business model of Zhuangyuanfang District remains influenced by the peripheral structure of Yide Road's specialized market cluster. Currently, the predominant operational model operates as a spot market system where small-to-medium wholesalers use hand carts to transport goods from residential-turned-storage warehouses within the district to designated collection points. Logistics companies then sort and distribute these goods to downstream retailers. This traditional approach has resulted in the encroachment of commercial land by storage facilities, affecting both Zhuangyuanfang District and the broader Yide Road commercial area.

The spot market's operational model cannot be completely phased out in the short term. Therefore, integrating exhibition-trade market approaches allows traditional and new business models to coexist initially, with conventional models gradually being phased out during market development (Figure4-18). The exhibition-trade market model requires separation between commercial spaces and storage areas, retaining only minimal temporary storage facilities within retail premises while relocating bulk wholesale goods to peripheral warehouses. These peripheral warehouses then process and distribute goods through

centralized sorting systems. By reallocating commercial spaces to social functions for product display and sales, this model enhances spatial quality and retail transaction efficiency[91].



Source: Literature[91]

Figure 4-18 Integrated Operation Model of Spot Market and Exhibition-Market

(2) Integration of online e-commerce platforms with offline markets to comprehensively expand new transaction methods

By integrating online e-commerce platforms, businesses can expand sales channels through multiple approaches: product distribution on e-commerce platforms, live-streaming sales, and content-driven product recommendations. Leveraging their unique industrial strengths, merchants adopt a core strategy of "online traffic expansion, offline experience cultivation, and mutual empowerment for symbiosis." This framework establishes four synergistic models, creating a complete commercial ecosystem that encompasses "content seeding- scenario conversion - private domain engagement -sustainable operations." Such an approach effectively addresses common challenges in traditional historic districts, including fluctuating foot traffic patterns, homogeneous business formats, and limited market reach.

(3)The introduction of industry-academia-research collaboration models promotes advancements in related industries

The initiative establishes community-based intangible cultural heritage (ICH) training workshops in collaboration with local universities' ICH programs, product design, and fashion design departments. The neighborhood provides vacant storefronts as rent-free studios and invites ICH artisans specializing in Guangdong embroidery and Cantonese opera costumes to serve as external mentors. Students develop practical products using traditional techniques, transforming traditional patterns into trendy apparel, cultural merchandise, and home decor items. Finished products are immediately tested in neighborhood stores, with bestsellers

directly connected to local supply chains for mass production. This approach not only addresses the challenge of skill transmission gaps but also creates new market channels for traditional crafts.

4.5 Continuity of Local Spatial Texture

4.5.1 Spatial Structure Optimization

To improve internal street connectivity within the original neighborhood, strategic adjustments to the urban fabric are needed.Zhuangyuanfang and Yanguang Streets serve as east-west corridors, while Xianleli, a wide east-west secondary street linked to main roads, has great vertical connection potential. However, the area lacks north-south thoroughfares to integrate the whole district.Field surveys show that Shengping New Street, connecting Zhuangyuanfang and Xianle New Street, is only blocked by No.27 Zhuangyuanfang (Figure 4-19). Its ground floor is elevated for bicycle parking and can be demolished at low cost to improve north-south access. Zhengshi Street, the widest secondary street, is suitably positioned and functionally connected to act as a key north-south corridor.

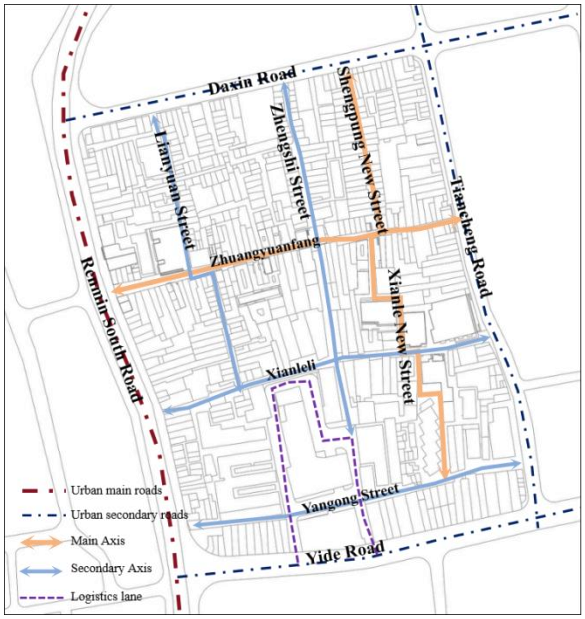


Source: author

Figure 4-19 Current condition photo of No.27 Zhuangyuanfang

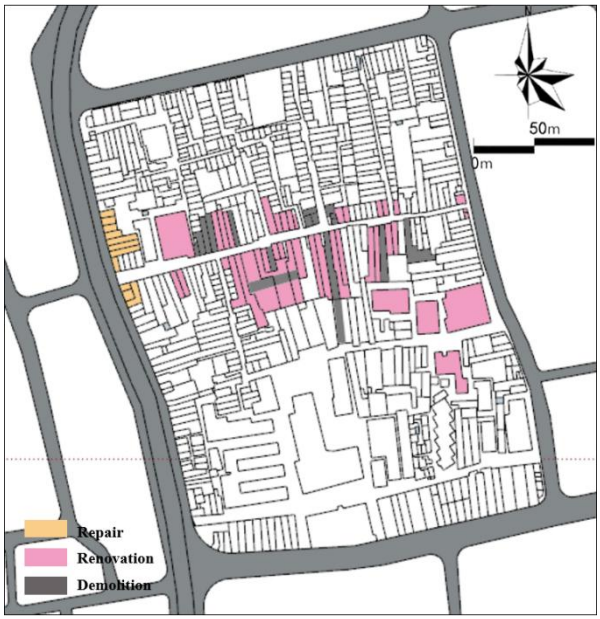
The redesign of Zhuangyuanfang District establishes a "cross-axis" spatial framework, utilizing Zhuangyuanfang as the east-west primary axis and a Shengping-Xianle New Street corridor to enhance north-south accessibility (Figure 4-20a). To reclaim commercial character from pervasive storage encroachment, a tiered redevelopment strategy — comprising restoration, renovation, and demolition (Figure 4-20b)—will be implemented. This approach preserves the integrity of core historical clusters through functional repositioning, optimizes

the internal layouts of central commercial structures to improve usability, and strategically clears substandard buildings to create public plazas and pocket parks. By integrating these interventions, the plan aims to revitalize the district ' s commercial environment while significantly enhancing natural lighting, ventilation, and the overall quality of public space.



Source: author

Figure 4-20a Spatial Structure Renewal Strategy for Zhuangyuanfang



Source: author

Figure 4-20b Renewal Strategy for Core Commercial Spaces in Shangyuanfang

4.5.2 Functional Space Replacement

4.5.2.1 Abolition of Storage Functions

To address the conflict between expanding warehousing and compressed commercial/pedestrian spaces, this study proposes an urban renewal strategy based on tiered management and functional adaptation. The current crisis stems from the spillover of bulk wholesale operations, which has resulted in two core negative impacts: the encroachment of street-facing retail by enclosed storage — stifling experiential commerce and cultural exhibitions — and the transformation of alleyways into congested cargo corridors, where chaotic freight traffic severely degrades the pedestrian experience. By implementing systematic functional adjustments, the design aims to decouple logistics from commerce, reclaiming the district' s accessibility and revitalizing its traditional commercial appeal.

(1) Promote systematic relocation of bulk storage facilities to alleviate warehousing pressure at its root cause

The core strategy drives warehouse relocation by transforming the business model

through industry negative lists, lease terminations, and operational subsidies. By phasing out bulk wholesale in favor of intangible cultural heritage (ICH), cultural innovation, and experiential retail, the plan eliminates the localized demand for bulk storage. This is supported by municipal coordination to relocate logistics to standardized peripheral parks, liberating core district space. A sustainable management framework and unified oversight ensure the prevention of storage reversion, creating a permanent shift from a logistics-heavy hub to a high-value commercial destination.

(2) Supplement small auxiliary storage facilities to achieve rearward layout of storage space

Rather than blanket prohibition, warehousing is adjusted via a "tailored approach" that phases out bulk storage while retaining small-scale auxiliary units compatible with retail. Ground-floor street-facing areas are strictly reserved for commercial displays and experiential retail, ensuring an accessible public interface. Secondary rear sections and upper-floor spaces serve as on-site inventory prep for individual stores, preventing cargo from encroaching on pedestrian paths. Furthermore, centralized shared storage is established in non-core areas to provide unified logistics for small businesses, minimizing street-level disruption and optimizing the neighborhood's commercial efficiency.

4.5.2.2 Integrated Utilization Development

(1) Core function configuration

Centered on the principle of "culture as the core, commerce as the lifeline, residential function as the foundation, and supporting facilities as the backbone," the Zhuangyuanfang district establishes an integrated functional system that harmoniously combines four key elements. This approach enables multidimensional utilization of space, time, and business formats, effectively addressing core challenges such as functional homogeneity, homogeneous commercial structures, separation between residential and commercial zones, and disconnection between cultural and commercial activities.

The cultural experience function abandons the isolated museum-style layout, adopting an embedded, scenario-based, and commercially symbiotic hybrid model. It restores a miniature imperial examination culture exhibition space at the former residence of the top scholar, integrating street-side cultural and creative stores with traditional Chinese learning experience workshops to achieve an integrated "exhibition-experience-consumption" synergy.

Distinctive commercial spaces abandon the monolithic full-retail model, adopting a horizontal micro-mixing approach with interwoven business formats and small-scale

differentiation. This strategy drives the composite upgrade of native formats encompassing "retail + customization + experience + service," while integrating cultural experience formats along main streets. The proportion of convenience-oriented formats is strictly controlled to remain no less than 20% of total commercial space, preserving the vibrancy of daily life and avoiding excessive commercialization.

Residential functionality, as the core foundation of locality, focuses on preserving indigenous communities and integrating work and living spaces. The bamboo tube houses undergo micro-renovation with the principle of 'maintaining original architectural style while upgrading interiors,' ensuring that residential functions account for no less than 40% of the total area. The Lingnan traditional vertical mixed model of 'shops below and residences above, front shops and rear workshops' is encouraged to achieve symbiosis among work, living, and commercial spaces.

Public facilities are adapted to the narrow street texture through embedded and composite sharing models, with minimally invasive upgrades to municipal safety infrastructure. Community public services are arranged in a composite layout, and the concept of "multi-time-use of single public space" is implemented to maximize spatial vitality.

(2) Spatial Mixed Utilization

The three-dimensional implementation framework for mixed-use development of local functions in Zhuangyuanfang District delineates the scope, core logic, and localized adaptation requirements of each mixed-use model across three key dimensions: vertical, horizontal, and spatiotemporal.

The vertical mixed-use design adopts individual buildings as floor-level units, implementing a tiered functional layout model featuring "commercial/cultural spaces on the ground floor, workshops/offices in the middle floor, and residential units on the upper level." In terms of site adaptation, the design strictly aligns with the core bamboo tube house architectural pattern of the neighborhood, preserving the original functional logic of Lingnan traditional commercial architecture characterized by "shops below and residences above, storefronts in front and workshops behind." Throughout the process, strict adherence to the principle of maintaining architectural structures and historical integrity is upheld.

Horizontal micro-mixing adopts a comprehensive approach covering entire streets and alleys, featuring an integrated layout of cultural, commercial, residential, and supporting facilities that achieve complementary coverage across all business formats within a hundred-meter radius. In terms of localized adaptation, continuous pure commercial zones are strictly avoided. The design requires one cultural node or public service facility for every 3-5 shops

while preserving the continuity of residential entrances, effectively balancing tourism-commercial functions with community lifestyle attributes.

The spatiotemporal integration model utilizes neighborhood public spaces as physical platforms, adopting a "multi-time-use within single space" approach. This enables a single site to serve diverse functions — including morning market services, residential leisure areas, cultural and creative markets, and cultural performances — through flexible scheduling, achieving comprehensive temporal utilization. In terms of localized adaptation, the design closely aligns with the daily routines of Guangzhou's urban residents and tourist visit patterns, eschewing rigid or enclosed functional layouts to maximize public spaces' vitality across all time periods (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2 Spatial Mixed Use Modes

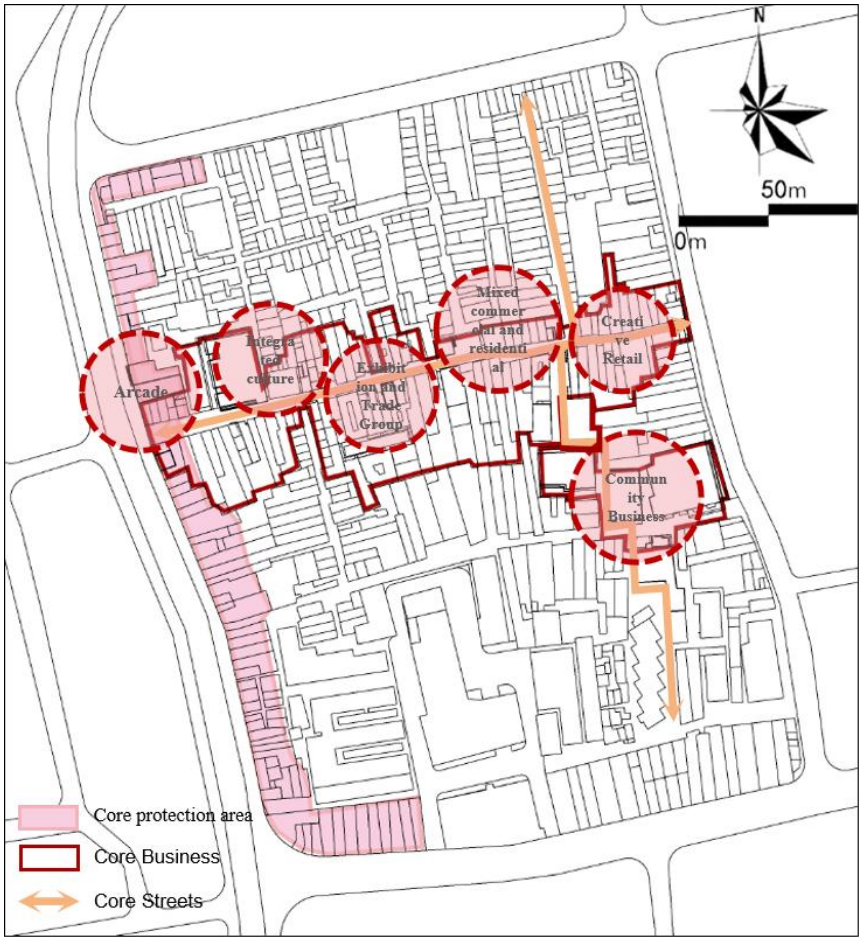
Source: author

Mixed dimensionality	landing range	Core Model	Key Points of Ground Adaptation
vertical mixing	At the level of individual building units	The lower tier comprises commercial/cultural spaces, the middle tier features workshops/office areas, and the upper tier is designated for residential use.	Strictly adapted to the architectural layout of bamboo tube houses, preserving the functional logic of traditional Lingnan commercial architecture without compromising structural integrity or architectural character.
horizontal micromixing	Street and alley level	Culture, commerce, residential areas, and supporting facilities are interspersed along streets and alleys, achieving full commercial coverage within a hundred-meter radius.	Avoid continuous purely commercial layouts; configure one cultural node or public convenience facility every 3-5 shops, while maintaining the continuity of residential entrances.
spacetime mixing	Public space level	The same space serves multiple functions such as convenience, recreation, market, and performance across different time periods.	The design adapts to the lifestyle habits of residents in Guangzhou's old city and the touring rhythm of tourists, avoiding rigid and enclosed functional layouts.

4.5.3 Creation of Distinctive Places

Following the clearance of storage spaces, Zhuangyuanfang District will be revitalized through a diversified spatial sequence that integrates cultural, commercial, and architectural dimensions (Figure 4-21). The journey begins at the Renmin South Road arcade complex, focusing on ICH crafts, and transitions into a cultural exhibition cluster at the market square, where repurposed shops serve as a historical gateway. Within the core business district, bamboo tube houses and multi-story residences are adaptively renovated into creative retail spaces and exhibition-trade complexes. These hubs feature large-scale display areas and public courtyards that serve as transitional nodes, guiding visitors from bustling commerce to

vibrant, leisure-oriented community shops. By preserving the original morphology of arcades, bamboo tube houses, and multi-story blocks, the redesign offers a multi-layered urban narrative that balances historical preservation with new consumption growth.



Source: author

Figure 4-21 Schematic diagram of characteristic place creation

4.5.4 Building Unit Renovation

4.5.4.1 Renovation of Arcade Commercial Buildings

The bamboo tube house along Renmin South Road adjacent to Zhuangyuanfang is situated within the core conservation zone of the Renmin South Road Historic District. In principle, large-scale renovations that could alter the architectural appearance or structural integrity are not permitted. As one of Zhuangyuanfang's entrances, the physical space renovation focuses solely on updating the facade of the arcade along Renmin South Road. Serving as a street entrance, it guides pedestrians into Zhuangyuanfang.

Guided by the principle of "preserving original characteristics with minimal intervention," tiered management measures are implemented for arcade facades: For well-preserved traditional facades, only conventional techniques are employed for cleaning,

restoration (Figure 4-22b), and reinforcement, with damaged finishes and structural components repaired using authentic local materials such as blue bricks, shell lime, and water-washed stone, strictly avoiding rigid substitution with modern materials. For facades subjected to unauthorized renovations or severe aesthetic degradation, regulatory rectification is conducted to restore original facade proportions, window layouts, and material textures, while standardizing street-facing facade colors and styles. Illegal outdoor advertisements and unauthorized constructions are removed to authentically preserve the original character of Lingnan-style arcades.

At the arcade junction connecting with Zhuangyuanfang Main Street, an embedded and non-destructive design approach was adopted to integrate a thematic signage system blending Zhuangyuan culture and Cantonese brick carving elements, creating a distinctive entrance gateway for the neighborhood. The renovation preserved the arcade's structural integrity and facade aesthetics, enhancing visual recognition through signage systems, directional paving, and lightweight landscape installations. This design naturally guides pedestrian flow from Renmin South Road's main thoroughfare into the inner alleys of Zhuangyuanfang.



Source: Internet

Figure 4-22a bamboo tube house



Source: Internet

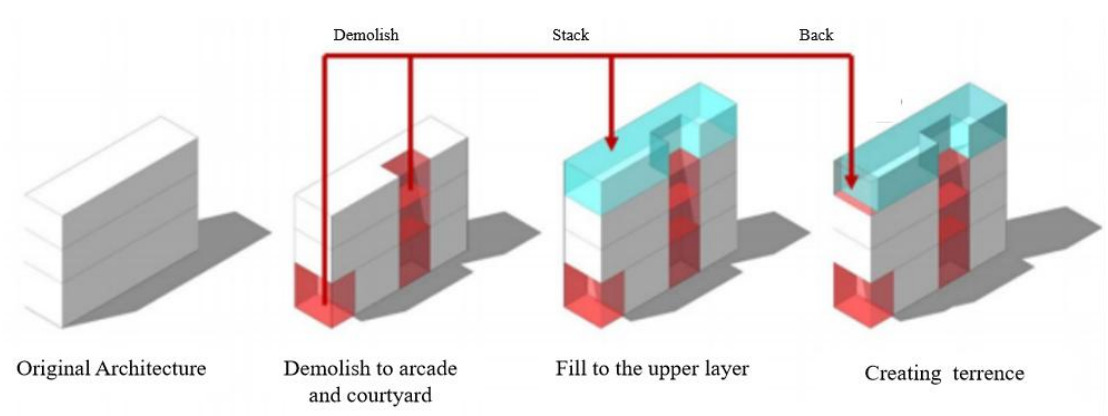
Figure 4-22b Schematic diagram of facade restoration with essential feature extraction

4.5.4.2 Adaptive Renovation of Bamboo Tube Houses

Traditional bamboo tube houses, the most prevalent architectural style in Zhuangyuanfang Street District, represent the quintessential traditional residential form of Guangzhou's historic urban core. Their distinctive spatial configuration — characterized by varying facade widths, elongated depth, front shops with rear residences, and lower commercial spaces above living quarters — exemplifies the fusion of Lingnan commercial culture and indigenous architectural wisdom, serving as the cornerstone of the district's unique urban fabric. Since modern times, however, most bamboo tube houses have suffered from unauthorized extensions and courtyard enclosures due to population overgrowth,

resulting in numerous structurally compromised dwellings. These structures not only suffer from poor indoor ventilation and damp conditions but also pose significant structural safety risks and fire hazards, making them the primary focus of this architectural renovation initiative.

The dismantling and stacking method (Figure 4-23) is employed as a renovation approach for bamboo tube houses, with its core principle being the restoration of courtyards. The originally filled courtyards, which were designed to maximize indoor space, are reconstructed, while the demolished building structures are superimposed onto the original volume of the bamboo tube house to maintain consistent total floor area and preserve its original functionality. Post-demolition, to address the expanded indoor spaces and unauthorized sealing of additional courtyards, one or two original courtyards are restored. This process reconstructs the traditional spatial sequence of "alleyway-front hall-courtyard-rear hall," fundamentally resolving issues related to ventilation, lighting, and drainage within the building. It also revives the ecological wisdom of Lingnan traditional architecture in adapting to humid climates while establishing critical fire evacuation routes for interior safety[66].



Source: Literature [109]

Figure 4-23 Schematic diagram of bamboo tube house renovation using the folding method

4.5.4.3 Ground Floor Renovation of Multi-story Residential Buildings

The multi-story residential buildings (mainly 1980s-90s collective dormitories and complexes) scattered in Zhuangyuanfang's side alleys are vital residential infrastructure. Their ground floors connect residential and commercial areas, balancing daily needs, tourism-commercial functions, convenient services and local characteristics. Adaptive renovation can revitalize these spaces, improve neighborhood amenities, preserve community vitality, and avoid over-commercialization or excessive tourism-oriented development.

In spatial design, a highly permeable modern commercial space is adopted: original windows are expanded into large floor-to-ceiling ones to enhance indoor-outdoor interaction and lighting (Figure 4-24). The ground-floor plaza is rationally planned with integrated greenery, creating scattered rest spaces in front of storefronts.



Source: Internet

Figure 4-24 Schematic diagram of ground floor renovation for residential buildings

4.6 Inclusive Renewal of Local Social Networks

4.6.1 Retention and Cultivation of Inclusive Communities

Communities serve as the core foundation of social networks. The primary prerequisite for inclusive urban renewal lies in preserving original neighborhood communities, fostering new collaborative communities, and accommodating transient professional groups. This approach establishes a diversified symbiotic structure encompassing "local residents, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, local businesses, young entrepreneurs, and transient populations," thereby laying the essential groundwork for social network restoration and fundamentally preventing community hollowing caused by elitist urban renewal practices.

4.6.1.1 Rigid rent control and renovation subsidies to retain existing original residents

Establish a rental control mechanism for residential blocks, providing 50%-80% financial subsidies for repairs of original residents' self-owned housing through a "government subsidy + property owner funding" model. Implement age-friendly renovations, structural reinforcement, and infrastructure upgrades for bamboo tube houses to address poor living conditions in old buildings. Simultaneously, prohibit uncontrolled rent increases after renovations by enforcing rental price guidelines for original residences, preventing forced relocation due to housing upgrades.

4.6.1.2 Employment and Entrepreneurship Support to Attract Young Indigenous Returnees

To support the younger generation of relocated indigenous communities, specialized

entrepreneurship policies have been introduced. Priority is given to granting leasehold rights and rent reductions for neighborhood shops, encouraging them to return home to operate local businesses, develop intangible cultural heritage-based creative industries, and establish community-oriented commercial ventures. Additionally, indigenous individuals are given priority access to positions in neighborhood management, intangible cultural heritage preservation, and property services. These measures aim to provide young indigenous residents with stable career opportunities within their communities, facilitate intergenerational integration, and bridge the generational gap within native communities.

4.6.1.3 Age-friendly Services and Community Support to Enhance Indigenous Residents' Sense of Belonging

To address the needs of elderly indigenous residents left behind, we will enhance the community elderly care service system by establishing community elderly care service stations and day care centers within neighborhoods, complemented by convenient services such as meal assistance, bathing support, and health management. Simultaneously, a deliberative mechanism for indigenous residents will be implemented, granting them priority in neighborhood renewal planning, business regulation, and activity coordination. This initiative aims to transform indigenous residents from passive observers into active participants in neighborhood development, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging and identity with the community.

4.6.2 Trade Network Development

4.6.2.1 Comprehensive Support for Intangible Cultural Heritage Inheritors

The initiative provides "zero-rent" workshop spaces for intangible cultural heritage inheritors specializing in Guangzhou embroidery and theatrical costume production, accompanied by comprehensive support including renovation subsidies, operational assistance, and brand promotion. It establishes collaborative mechanisms between heritage studios and universities/cultural institutions to facilitate skill transmission and modernization. By incorporating these inheritors into neighborhood renewal governance committees, they are granted decision-making authority in cultural preservation and business regulation, positioning them as pivotal forces in sustaining local cultural heritage and fostering community connections.

4.6.2.2 Cultivation and Protection of Established Merchant Entities

Targeted support policies will be implemented for local heritage brands, community-based businesses, and traditional costume workshops remaining in the neighborhood,

featuring protective low-rent arrangements and prohibiting arbitrary evictions. Merchants will receive complimentary operational training and digital transformation guidance to align with modern consumer demands. The initiative will also facilitate the formation of merchant alliances among original businesses, fostering collaborative development and reinforcing their pivotal role in the neighborhood's commercial ecosystem.

4.6.3 Integration of Migrant Population

For migrant tenants and mobile vendors who account for over 85% of the population in the neighborhood, the "one-size-fits-all eviction" model for renewal has been abandoned in favor of a strategy emphasizing "screening and guidance, inclusive integration, and standardized management." This approach transforms mobile populations that align with the neighborhood's identity from transient visitors into co-constructors of the community, thereby filling the gaps in social networks.

4.6.3.1 Business Format Screening and Flexible Guidance

For existing wholesale and warehousing operations within the district, a one-time clearance approach is not adopted. Instead, a flexible guidance policy with a three-year transition period is implemented to gradually phase out non-compliant warehousing facilities and low-end "three-in-one" business models. The policy aims to guide compliant operations such as original clothing design, cultural and creative wholesale, and intangible cultural heritage-related businesses to adhere to standardized practices while retaining high-quality mobile business entities aligned with the district's positioning.

4.6.3.2 Community Integration of Mobile Populations

Establish a new citizen service system to provide convenient services such as residence permit processing, children's education consultation, and skills training for mobile tenants and merchants within the neighborhood. Incorporate transient businesses and tenants into the community deliberation system, inviting their participation in neighborhood environment improvement, business management, and event planning to break down identity barriers between locals and newcomers. Organize merchant networking events and collaborative neighborhood-building activities to promote integration between migrant groups and original residents, helping them seamlessly integrate into the local community network.

4.6.3.3 Introduction of Young Principal Managers Training

To address vacant building spaces in urban neighborhoods, we will establish a low-cost youth cultural innovation incubation hub. This initiative will attract young entrepreneurs specializing in Cantonese culture, intangible cultural heritage (ICH) creative products, and

original design, offering them rent-free periods, operational support, and promotional strategies. By creating collaborative platforms connecting young entrepreneurs with ICH inheritors and local businesses, we aim to position youth as bridges between traditional culture and modern consumption trends, thereby revitalizing the neighborhood's social fabric.

4.7 Summary of This Chapter

This chapter interprets conservation requirements in urban planning to outline specific guidelines for protecting traditional streets in the Zhuangyuanfang area within historical district preservation plans. These guidelines cover protection levels, conservation content, revitalization strategies, cultural heritage preservation, supporting facilities, and environmental enhancement standards. Through analyzing two historically similar districts with shared local characteristics, the study identifies localized renewal strategies including spatial morphology restoration, cultural gene transmission, and business-population structure optimization, which are then applied to the Zhuangyuanfang district renovation case. Corresponding to the local context challenges summarized in Chapter 3, the proposed renewal strategies are summarized as follows:

The preservation of cultural heritage. Within Guangzhou's broader cultural landscape, Zhuangyuanfang District is part of the Renminnan Historical and Cultural Block, representing a vital component of Lingnan commercial culture. The area boasts abundant cultural resources that can be leveraged to develop cultural corridors and establish a network of local cultural venues, thereby enhancing the continuity of Guangzhou's urban culture. By revitalizing cultural heritage through localized activities—integrating daily routines, thematic events, and festive celebrations—a dynamic system will emerge. This approach will naturally promote Zhuangyuanfang's cultural identity, attract visitors, and foster organic interactions between local communities and their physical environment.

Revitalizing distinctive commercial formats. Exploring the commercial history of Zhuangyuanfang District reveals valuable traditional crafts such as Guangzhou embroidery culture and theatrical costume production. By integrating modern retail models, these traditional crafts can be upgraded into experiential commerce, reviving the characteristic "front store, back workshop" experience model. On the other hand, addressing local communities 'demand for supporting commercial facilities, community-oriented experiential commerce should be developed. This approach not only meets residents' essential needs but

also introduces small-scale community businesses managed by local operators, attracting tourists and young demographics to boost consumption and enhance neighborhood vitality. Fundamentally, the traditional spot-market transaction model should be improved through exhibition trade markets and industry-academia collaboration, gradually phasing out conventional business models. This approach resolves local warehousing challenges while elevating commercial space quality and product innovation capabilities.

Continuation of spatial texture. The micro-updating of localized spatial forms constitutes the core focus of this chapter's renewal strategy. First, we will systematically review the overall spatial structure. Based on current surveys, low-cost demolition of partial building structures will be implemented to connect north-south and east-west roads within the neighborhood, delineating main axes and core commercial zones. Commercial storage spaces encroaching on street fronts will be removed, with existing facilities repurposed to achieve mixed-use development. Characteristic spaces will be developed along Zhuangyuanfang Street to create a cohesive commercial-cultural narrative, linking the western entrance at Renmin South Road with the eastern entrance at Tiancheng Road to form a multi-dimensional commercial experience loop. Three primary building types will undergo renovation: facades of arcade buildings in the core conservation area will be restored, traditional bamboo tube houses will be transformed using the "dismantling and stacking" technique, and ground floors of multi-story residences will be repurposed for community commerce.

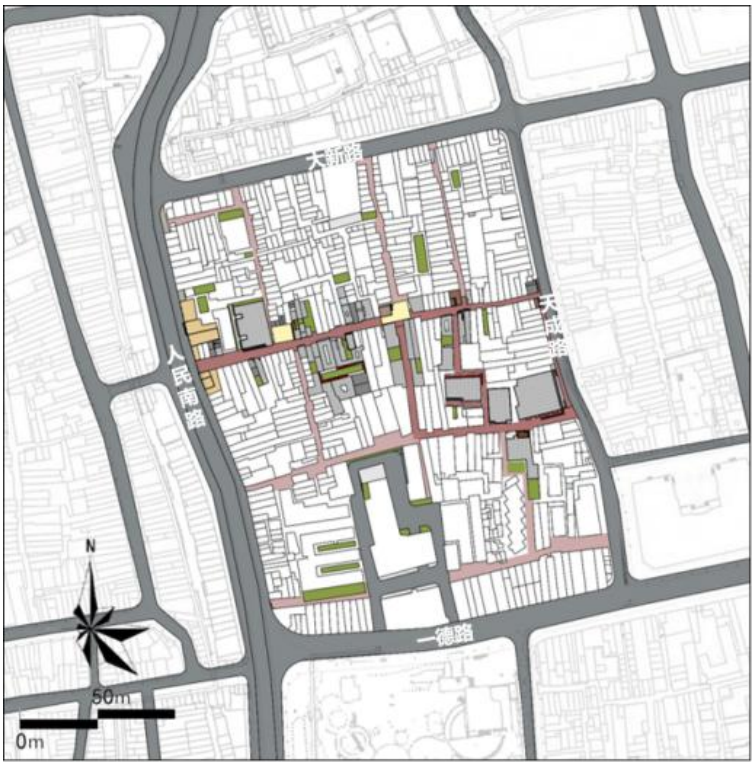
Inclusive Modernization of Social Networks. By implementing inclusive strategies for three primary social networks, we aim to preserve the original community ethos: retaining and nurturing existing local communities to prevent further attrition of indigenous populations; fostering commercial networks that support distinctive industries through measures like rent reductions for intangible cultural heritage practitioners to mitigate business losses; integrating migrant populations by aligning their needs with local business operations, thereby achieving organic integration between transient communities and native communities.

Chapter 5 Design of Commercial Node Space along Zhuangyuanfang Street

5.1 Overall Design Concept

5.1.1 Design Principles

The overall design (FIgure 5-1) is guided by the core philosophy of "respecting architectural textures, optimizing spatial configurations, connecting cultural narratives, and fostering symbiotic prosperity," strictly adhering to three fundamental principles: First, the rigid preservation of original textures maintains the fishbone-like topology of the neighborhood's "main streets-side alleys-residential blocks," preserving the core street alignments, connectivity patterns, and spatial scales while enhancing accessibility and spatial quality through micro-updates. Second, the functional integration principle sustains the neighborhood's inherent "commercial-residential symbiosis," balancing commercial and residential demands to prevent excessive commercial expansion from encroaching on residential living spaces. Third, the narrative linkage principle establishes Zhuangyuanfang Main Street as the central axis connecting four functional nodes, creating a cohesive spatial sequence that progresses from "entrance hospitality-cultural immersion-commercial exhibitions-community gathering spaces-neighborhood services."



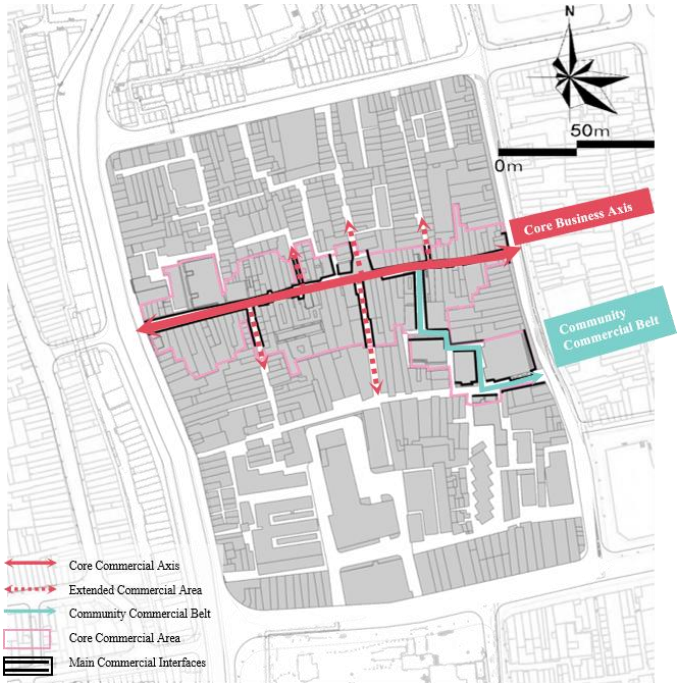
Source: author

Figure 5-1 Site Plan

5.1.2 Core Design Scope

Building upon the spatial configuration and structural framework of Zhuangyuanfang District, the core commercial development axis is designated as Zhuangyuanfang Street. This central hub will organically expand commercial functions to adjacent roads including Xianle New Street and Tiancheng Road, forming an extended community commercial belt that collectively constitutes the district's core design scope (Figure 5-2).

Within this scope, design will further delineate the primary commercial street interfaces, implement more rigorous design controls and morphological guidance for commercial buildings in the core area, and provide refined, systematic control and design directives for major commercial interfaces along the streets to enhance the overall commercial quality and visual continuity of the space.



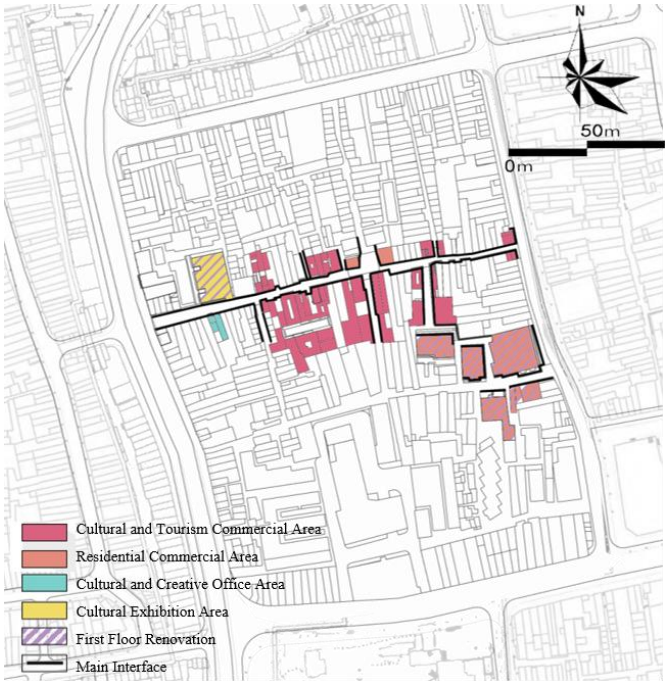
Source: author

Figure 5-2 Schematic diagram of core design scope definition

5.1.3 Functional Guidance for Commercial Spaces

For the core commercial zone extending from Zhuangyuanfang Main Street to its subordinate alleyways, systematic functional repositioning strategies (Figure 5-3) should be implemented to optimize regional commercial structures and enhance overall vitality. Specifically, areas adjacent to Zhuangyuanfang Main Street should prioritize clustering cultural tourism businesses, creative office spaces, and cultural exhibition facilities to establish a cultural-themed commercial axis with strong commercial appeal. Vertical integration should be encouraged to achieve efficient spatial utilization through mixed-use

development. In the extended sections connecting to subordinate streets, point-based layouts centered around public spaces should focus on developing lifestyle-oriented commercial services to meet residents' daily needs. Renovation efforts should primarily target ground floors or first two floors of buildings, emphasizing improved street accessibility and convenience to create a well-structured commercial network with clear functional hierarchies and complementary services.



Source: author

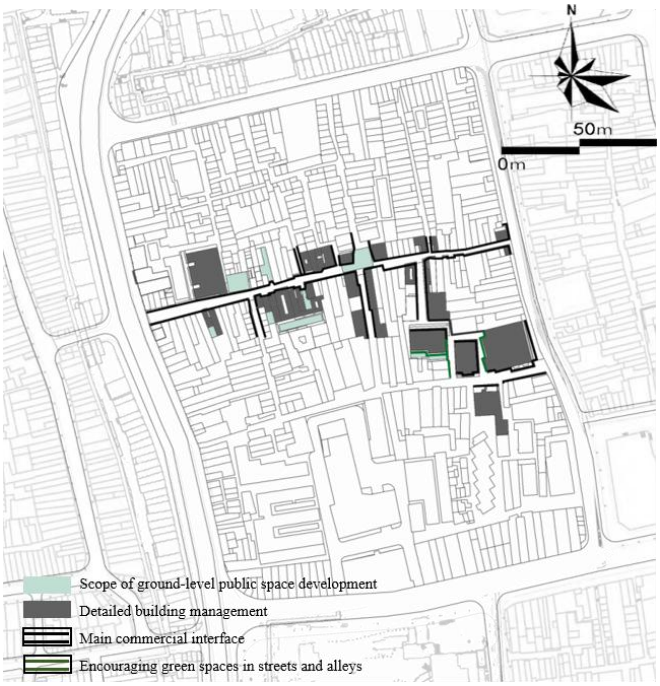
Figure 5-3 Schematic diagram of commercial space functional guidance

5.1.4 Public Space Control

The core objective of public space governance lies in redefining the spatial texture perception of Zhuangyuanfang District within the context of modern commercial activities. Through systematic planning and design, the initiative aims to establish a harmonious spatial language that integrates various public areas with commercial buildings within the district (Figure 5-4). This process not only focuses on physical form integration but also emphasizes functional coherence and experiential continuity, thereby enhancing the overall environmental quality and commercial vitality of the district.

Regarding the implementation strategies for guiding and regulating public space design, the first step involves clearly delineating development boundaries and scope for ground-level public spaces at major commercial interfaces. These areas should be planned as open spaces such as public green spaces, civic squares, or pedestrian streets, with partial demolition of low-quality building structures to effectively alleviate the excessive compactness and density

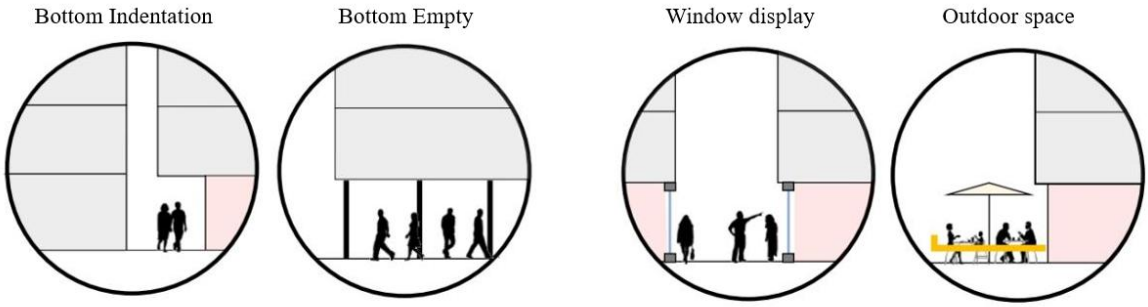
of the original architectural layout in Zhuangyuanfang District. This approach will provide citizens and visitors with more leisure, social interaction, and activity spaces. Secondly, refined architectural control measures should be implemented for street-facing facades of key cultural tourism commercial facilities, cultural exhibition venues, and daily life service commercial buildings within the district.



Source: author

Figure 5-4 Schematic diagram of public space control

The implementation strategy involves four key approaches (Figure 5-5): Firstly, encouraging commercial buildings along streets to adopt recessed designs on ground floors to expand pedestrian spaces. Secondly, utilizing elevated ground-floor layouts to enhance transparency and visual connectivity. Thirdly, promoting window displays on ground floors to boost commercial ambiance. Additionally, outdoor seating areas should be strategically designated and managed to diversify business formats, while incorporating greenery to naturally soften commercial environments. These measures ultimately achieve organic integration between commercial functions and public spaces, resulting in improved quality and enhanced urban aesthetics.



Source: author

Figure 5-5 Schematic diagram of refined management practices for commercial buildings

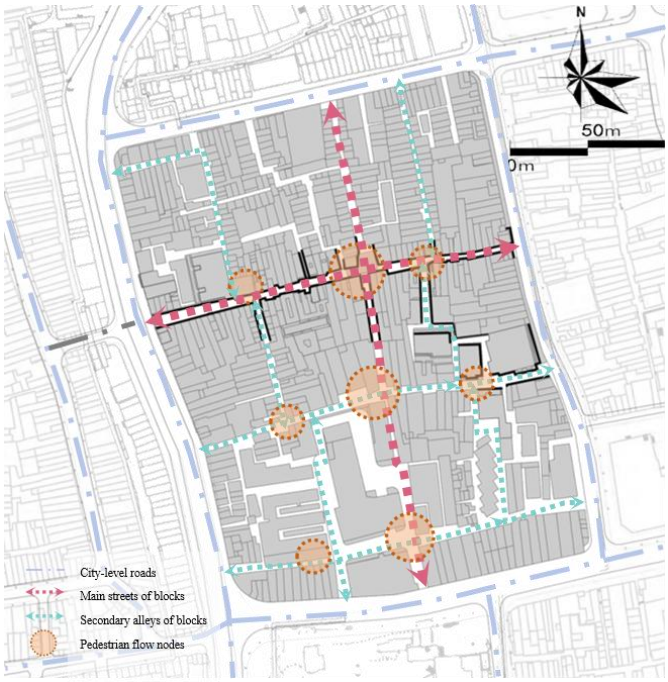
5.1.5 Traffic Organization and Flow Line Design

The traffic organization (Figure 5-6) adopts the core principle of "pedestrian priority and slow traffic friendliness," optimizing traffic flow patterns within the block to establish a three-tier pedestrian network comprising "main streets as primary axes, secondary lanes as auxiliary axes, and node hubs as connecting points."

Main Street Axis: Preserve the original width of 2-7 meters and D/H ratio (0.8-1.5) of Zhuangyuanfang Main Street, eliminate street vending and illegal constructions, optimize the ground paving with marble slabs, ensure pedestrian accessibility and spatial enclosure, and establish it as the core pedestrian corridor and commercial display interface of the block.

Side Street Axis: Implement micro-upgrading measures for branch streets such as Youbu Lane and Zhengshi Street, widening narrow sections to over 3 meters, repairing damaged road surfaces, adding nighttime lighting facilities, and establishing connecting channels between branch streets and main streets as well as residential clusters, thereby forming a traffic pattern of "main street diversion and branch street decentralization".

Node hubs: Establish squares and green spaces along main streets and secondary alleys as pedestrian relief nodes to optimize crowd flow organization at intersection points. Implement pedestrian buffer zones and directional signage to facilitate seamless transitions between functional areas and street corridors, thereby preventing pedestrian congestion and enhancing the continuity and comfort of walking experiences.



Source: author

Figure 5-6 Schematic diagram of traffic organization

5.2 Zhuangyuanfang Comprehensive Cultural and Creative Market

5.2.1 Overview of Node Design

The Comprehensive Cultural and Creative Market (Figure 5-7a, b)is situated 20 meters east of the main entrance on Renmin South Road in Zhuangyuanfang District, serving as the inaugural space for urban renewal. Designed as a cultural showcase and creative retail hub, this mixed-use development features diverse experiential spaces: The ground floor of multi-story residences has been repurposed as the Zhuangyuanfang Historical Culture Exhibition Hall, while traditional bamboo tube houses have been adapted into intangible cultural heritage stores and creative retail complexes. Partial structures were demolished to create an open-air marketplace plaza, accommodating seasonal outdoor events and temporary rest areas.



Source: author

Figure 5-7a: General Layout Plan of Cultural and Creative Market



Source: author

Figure 5-7b: Axonometric schematic diagram of the cultural and creative market axis

The core of architectural renovation strategies lies in carefully demolishing and renewing specific building structures (Figure 5-8b)while fully respecting and preserving the original neighborhood texture and character, thereby creating valuable public spaces. Specifically, an open-air market square should be established as the central public activity hub and visual focal point of the entire area. Meanwhile, scattered vacant plots can be transformed into auxiliary courtyards or landscaped green spaces serving surrounding commercial functions, enriching spatial hierarchy and diversifying business formats.

The core design philosophy of node flowline guidance (Figure 5-8c) lies in strategically arranging the layout and spatial relationships of functional buildings within nodes to consciously create narrative atmospheres rich in storytelling and emotional resonance. This spatial narrative naturally guides visitors' walking paths and exploration directions, enabling them to experience continuous spatial richness while moving through and pausing at key points. By deeply integrating with commercial environments, it significantly enhances the enjoyment and immersion levels throughout the visiting and consumption experience.

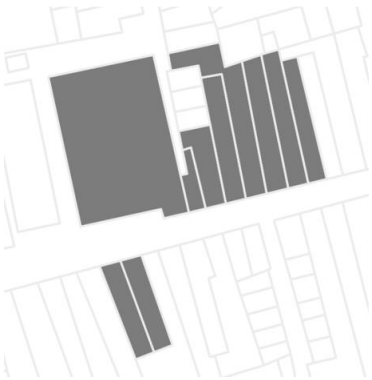


Figure 5-8a Original architectural texture



Figure 5-8b Partial demolition

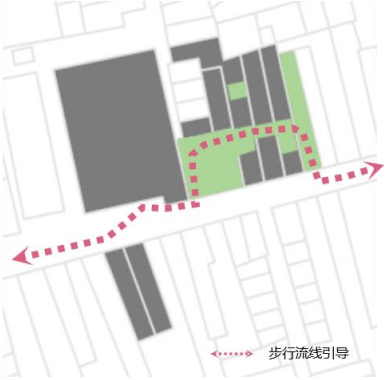


Figure 5-8c Pedestrian flowline guidance

Source: author

5.2.2 Zhuangyuanfang Historical and Cultural Exhibition Hall

5.2.2.1 Current Issue Diagnosis

Zhuangyuanfang Buildings #94 and #96 (Figure 5-9), eight-story residential complexes, stand as the largest structures at the neighborhood entrance, commanding central visual prominence and pedestrian flow. However, they face three critical issues: First, functional inefficiency—while the ground-floor street-facing area houses shops (serving food services, auto repair, and logistics), most interior spaces are occupied by storage facilities, resulting in extremely low building utilization. Second, poor spatial experience: storage areas enclose narrow stairwells with poor vertical circulation and lack public open spaces, severely mismatching the cultural display requirements of the entrance node. Third, architectural incongruity: the building facades lack unified design, with chaotic roller shutter doors and storage signage that fail to reflect the neighborhood's historical and cultural identity.



Source: author

Figure 5-9 Current Status of Buildings #94 and #96 in Zhuangyuanfang

5.2.2.2 Renovation Design Strategy

To address the current challenges, the renovation strategy of "functional replacement, spatial reconstruction, and stylistic harmony" was implemented, transforming the ground floor into the Zhuangyuanfang Historical and Cultural Exhibition Hall, which integrates display, interactive, and leisure functions (Figure 5-10a, b).

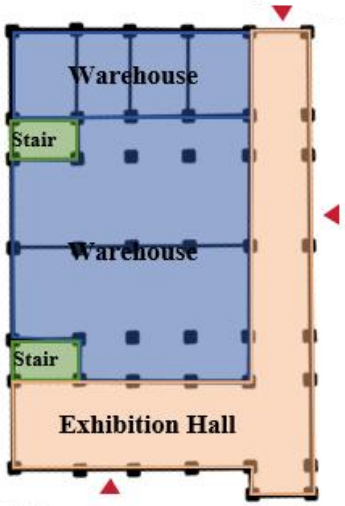
(1) Functional substitution

The interior storage partitions on the ground floor will be removed to integrate street-facing shops with the inner storage space, transforming the area into three functional zones: "Historical Context Exhibition Zone," "Zhuangyuan Culture Exhibition Zone," and "Guangzhou Embroidery Intangible Cultural Heritage Exhibition Zone." Through archival photographs, physical exhibits, multimedia presentations, and interactive installations, the exhibition systematically showcases Zhuangyuanfang's evolution across historical periods—from its role in imperial examination traditions during the Song Dynasty, to the commercial prosperity of the Ming-Qing Thirteen Factories era, the industrial clustering of the Republic of China era, and its current status as a modern cultural landmark. It also highlights core cultural resources such as the legendary story of Zhang Zhensun, the imperial scholar, and the craftsmanship of Guangzhou embroidery theatrical costumes.



Source: author

Figure 5-10a Schematic diagram of current first-floor functions in the building



Source: author

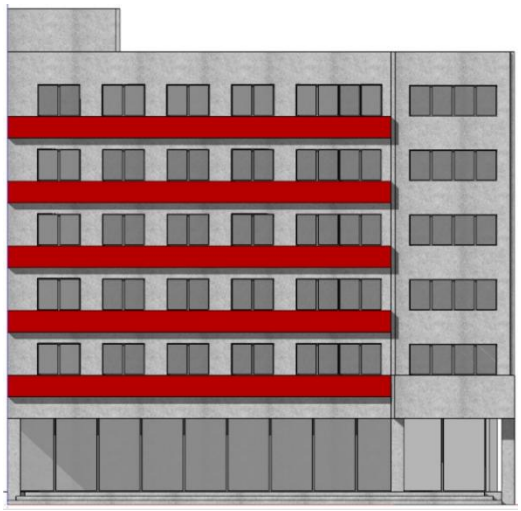
Figure 5-10b Schematic diagram of post-renovation floor plan functions

(2) Spatial optimization

New public entrances facing the main street will be added, with the entrance lobby widened to 4 meters to enhance spatial openness and accessibility. The internal circulation system will be redesigned, converting the original narrow stairwell into a comfortable public staircase equipped with accessible ramps to accommodate diverse user needs. Small rest areas and cultural product retail zones will be integrated within the exhibition hall, creating a seamless "display-experience-consumption" functional loop.

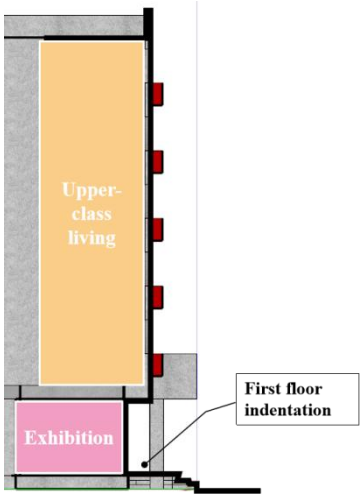
(3) Synergistic renewal of appearance and features

The renovation preserves the original building's main structural framework and existing window layout while implementing systematic facade restoration. During wall repairs, locally sourced materials like bricks and plaster are prioritized to maintain the site's historical texture and architectural character. Distinctive thematic color bands are strategically integrated into the facade design, serving as visual layering elements that create cohesive rhythmic patterns and cultural landmarks for the neighborhood (Figure 5-11a). The previously disorganized rolling shutters have been replaced with innovative wooden grilles paired with transparent glass windows, ensuring visual transparency while skillfully echoing traditional Guangdong architectural styles and detailing techniques. Through localized setback designs on ground floors (Figure 5-11b), the public interface facing Zhuangyuanfang Street has been expanded, creating transitional "gray spaces" that function as exhibition entry points. These transitional zones not only encourage pedestrian engagement but also enrich spatial experiences between streets and buildings through enhanced accessibility.



Source: author

Figure 5-11a Schematic diagram of the renovated facade



Source: author

Figure 5-11b Schematic diagram of ground-floor setback control

5.2.3 Intangible Cultural Heritage Creative Goods Store

5.2.3.1 Current Issue Diagnosis

Zhuangyuanfang Buildings #97 and #99 (Figure 5-12) exemplify traditional Cantonese bamboo tube houses, featuring a facade width of approximately 3 meters and a depth of about 12 meters — four times the width — representing a classic "narrow facade, deep interior" architectural style. Current challenges include: 1) Poor lighting and ventilation due to three-sided enclosure by neighboring buildings with only minimal street-facing windows, resulting in dim and damp interiors unsuitable for commercial operations; 2) Disorganized functional layout: two bamboo tube houses share a cramped staircase, with only a small portion of the street-facing area used for shops while the rest remains unused storage space, leading to extremely low spatial efficiency; 3) Damaged architectural aesthetics: partial facade obstructions severely contradict the cultural ambiance expected at the entrance node.



Source: author

Figure 5-12 Current status photos of Zhuangyuanfang #97 and #99

5.2.3.2 Renovation Design Strategy

Guided by three core principles—preserving the original architectural form, optimizing indoor lighting conditions, and revitalizing spatial functions—a comprehensive adaptive renovation was carried out on traditional bamboo tube houses. The project transformed them into an integrated intangible cultural heritage (ICH) creative space that combines ICH exhibition, cultural product retail, and interactive handicraft experiences.

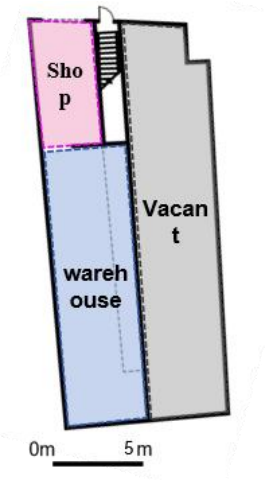
(1) Spatial pattern reconstruction

The partial walls between two adjacent bamboo tube houses and the original inefficient storage partitions were demolished, merging the previously separate architectural blocks into a unified large space. This expansion increased the street-facing commercial display area to 6 meters, significantly enhancing visual transparency and street appeal of the shops while improving commercial presentation effects. Additionally, in the central building zone, some upper structures were removed to create a 20-square-meter inner courtyard. By skillfully integrating courtyard design with side windows, an effective "cross-ventilation" effect was achieved, fundamentally improving natural lighting and ventilation conditions within the interior space.

(2) Functional composite implantation

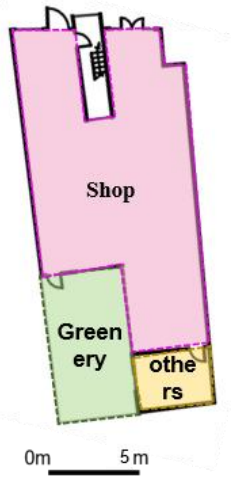
The facility adopts a three-phase functional layout following the "front-store, middle-experience, rear-support" model. The street-facing section functions as an intangible cultural heritage retail zone, showcasing specialty products including Guangzhou embroidery pendants, theatrical costume pattern designs, and imperial examination-themed souvenirs. The central courtyard area serves as a hands-on workshop zone with 4-6 interactive stations

offering regular introductory courses on basic embroidery techniques and theatrical costume pattern creation. The rear end of the building houses compact storage and auxiliary spaces to meet inventory management and daily operational needs (Figure 5-13b).



Source: author

Figure 5-13a Floor plan of current building status

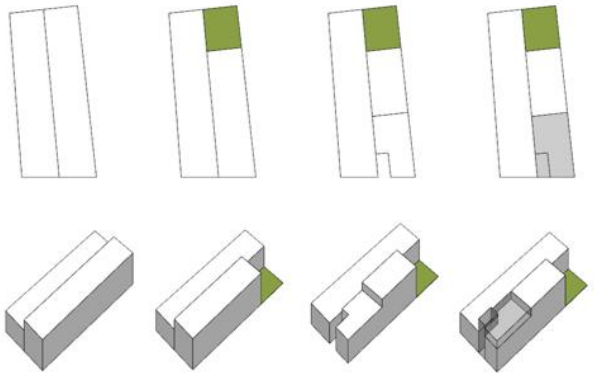


Source: author

Figure 5-13b Schematic diagram of post-modification planar function

(3) Facade and Spatial Volume Renovation

Moving beyond traditional imitation designs, this project optimizes the architectural style while preserving the original bamboo tube house form. The ground floor features floor-to-ceiling glass windows and doors to enhance spatial transparency and display effects, while retaining original window openings on upper floors with plaster walls and PVC window frames that harmonize with surrounding structures. Glass elements are strategically integrated into demolished volumes to compensate for floor area loss and optimize indoor courtyard lighting (Figure 5-14a) through natural light transmission. This creates an organic fusion of "traditional textures + modern materials," embodying a dialogue between historical heritage and contemporary innovation (Figure 5-14b).



Source: author

Figure 5-14a: Spatial Transformation



Figure 5-14b: Diagram of Facade

5.2.4 Creative Retail

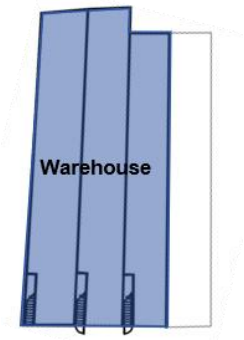
5.2.4.1 Current Issue Diagnosis

Zhuangyuanfang Buildings #78, #76, and #74 (Figure 5-15) are three interconnected bamboo tube houses, each measuring approximately 3 meters in width and 14 meters in depth, sharing the architectural characteristic of "narrow width and deep depth." Current issues are prominent: Firstly, severe spatial fragmentation exists as the three buildings operate independently with separate entrances and vertical circulation systems, some of which are blocked, creating spatial discontinuities. Secondly, functional inefficiency is evident—most ground-floor space is occupied by storage areas without clear functional zoning (Figure 5-16), with only basic packaging operations conducted behind stairwells, failing to leverage the core area's commercial potential. Thirdly, environmental conditions are subpar: interior spaces are dim and damp, lacking natural lighting and ventilation, along with no landscaping or recreational facilities, rendering them entirely unsuitable for modern commercial operations.



Source: author

Figure 5-15 Photos of No.78, No.76, and No.74



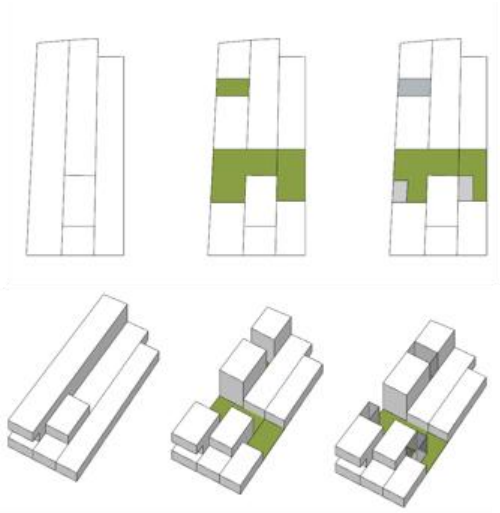
Source: author

Figure 5-16 Current function

5.2.4.2 Renovation Design Strategy

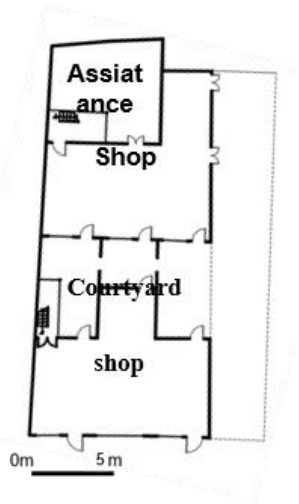
This study expands the deconstruction and reconstruction methodology by integrating indoor spaces and courtyard areas from the volumes of three bamboo tube houses after demolition. The original vertical circulation space directly facing the street is relocated to ensure uninterrupted commercial experience. The consolidated spatial configuration not only provides optimal indoor environments for business operations but also ensures adequate natural lighting and ventilation throughout all architectural volumes. (Figure 5-17)

In the redesign of the planar functional layout (Figure 5-18), the commercial building's overall space has been meticulously organized into three distinct functional zones, forming a logically coherent tripartite structure. Firstly, the street-facing shops are positioned as a concentrated showcase area for distinctive business formats. By integrating thematic exhibitions with premium retail experiences, this space aims to create an immersive consumption environment rich in narrative elements and interactive features, attracting foot traffic and enhancing commercial value. Secondly, through the transitional courtyard green space, visitors enter the central commercial zone designated as the Intangible Cultural Heritage Experience Area. This functional zone is designed to transform traditional craft production processes into participatory consumption experiences. Through hands-on practice and interactive engagement, visitors can deeply appreciate the essence of craftsmanship while gaining renewed understanding of the cultural significance and charm of intangible heritage. Finally, auxiliary facilities are strategically concentrated at the building's rear end, ensuring smooth commercial circulation while facilitating efficient equipment deployment, management operations, and flexible temporary storage solutions.



Source: author

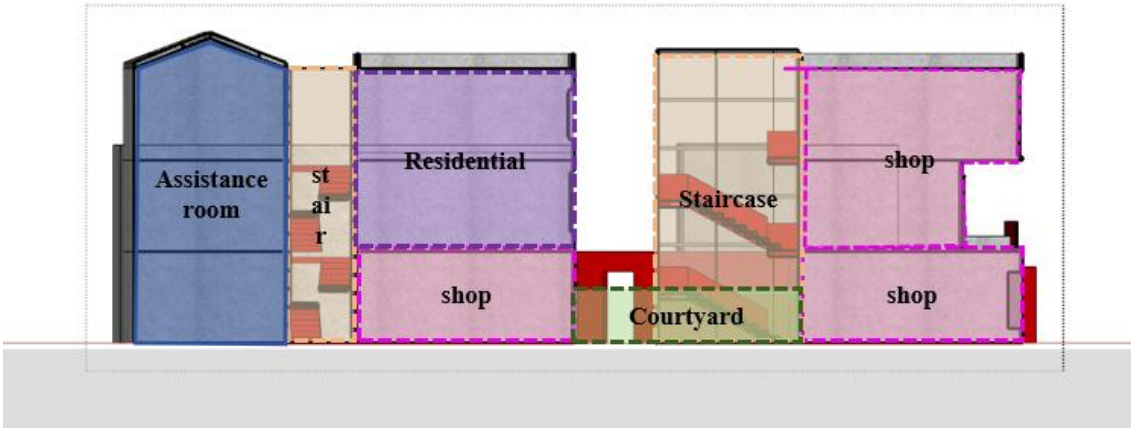
Figure 5-17 Building Block Renovation



Source: author

Figure 5-18 Planar functional layout

In the vertical functional layout (Figure 5-19), the principle of mixed-use development is adopted to restore traditional spatial configurations such as "shops fronting residences" and "residences above commercial spaces," achieving efficient multi-purpose utilization. Specifically, buildings along Zhuangyuanfang's perimeter will be exclusively designated as retail spaces, featuring expansive transparent storefront windows facing streets to enhance visual appeal and attract pedestrian attention. An integrated vertical circulation system within courtyards facilitates seamless movement between floors, complemented by strategically placed greenery to improve environmental quality and microclimate conditions. The central section retains its ground floor as experiential retail zones, while the second and third floors preserve residential functionality connected via dedicated vertical access routes, effectively minimizing commercial foot traffic interference to preserve living privacy and tranquility. The terminal section is entirely dedicated to auxiliary facilities, ensuring comprehensive logistical support and service coordination throughout the complex.



Source: author

Figure 5-19 Section of vertical functions in creative retail

5.3 Zhuangyuanfang Guangzhou Embroidery Exhibition and Trade Cluster

5.3.1 Overview of Node Design

Located at the intersection of Zhuangyuanfang Main Street and Youbu Lane, the Exhibition and Trade Cluster serves as a pivotal hub along the district's core commercial axis. It integrates Guangzhou embroidery—an intangible cultural heritage—into innovative retail formats, establishing itself as a premier exhibition center for premium embroidery products, a hub for trendy cultural innovations, and a venue for small-to-medium commercial exhibitions. The design philosophy centers on "spatial integration, multifunctional versatility, and cultural empowerment." Addressing the spatial constraints of traditional bamboo tube houses, the project achieves modern commercial efficiency through interconnected interiors, courtyard

integration, and functional reconfiguration while preserving the district's authentic architectural texture and commercial DNA, ultimately realizing symbiotic development between "traditional architecture and contemporary commerce."

5.3.2 Current Issue Diagnosis

The houses numbered #69 to #79 (Figure 5-20) in Zhuangyuanfang within the compound form a continuous cluster of bamboo tube structures. These buildings, mostly two to three stories high, are distributed along both sides of the main street and Youbu Alley. The current state of this architectural complex highlights three core challenges: First, the spatial fragmentation is pronounced. Each bamboo tube building has extremely limited facade width ranging from 2.5 to 3 meters, while their depth reaches 10 to 12 meters. The absence of partition walls between individual units creates elongated, narrow spaces that fail to meet modern commercial demands for centralized exhibition areas and social interaction spaces. Second, functional misalignment persists. Although the ground floor was originally designed as retail storefronts, most units have been repurposed as warehouse logistics facilities or garment packaging workshops, erasing the original commercial vitality. Third, traffic flow and environmental quality issues are critical. Staircases are typically narrower than 1 meter with inadequate natural lighting, while many entrances face direct street access. Shared traffic spaces between adjacent buildings further exacerbate chaotic crowd management. Additionally, interior spaces remain dimly lit, poorly ventilated, and lack fire safety equipment, posing significant safety hazards.



Source: author

Figure 5-20 Current status of Zhuangyuanfang No.69-79 (odd-numbered units)

5.3.3 Renovation Design Strategy

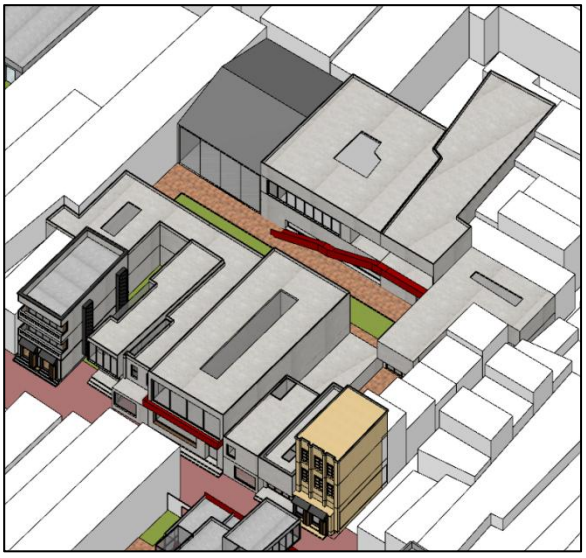
5.3.3.1 Spatial Integration and Pattern Restructuring

The fundamental renovation plan aims to transform the originally narrow and isolated bamboo tube house units into spacious functional spaces tailored for modern exhibition and commercial needs. The core principle of the renovation is to achieve spatial integration and connectivity by removing internal partitions and reorganizing circulation patterns, while preserving the building's original structural texture and architectural character. Simultaneously, an open public courtyard system is created, which not only enhances natural lighting and ventilation conditions indoors but also provides users with centralized, open areas for public activities and social interactions, thereby significantly improving spatial functionality and comfort levels (Figure 5-21a, b).



Source: author

Figure 5-21a: Plan view of the exhibition and trade cluster



Source: author

Figure 5-21b: Axonometric schematic diagram of the exhibition and trade cluster

In the spatial texture renovation (Figure 5-22), existing partition walls between bamboo tube houses and non-load-bearing structures were demolished and integrated to merge previously isolated units into continuous commercial spaces. This approach effectively expanded usable areas and enhanced spatial flexibility to accommodate exhibitions and trade activities of varying scales and formats. The renovation prioritized preserving the building's original load-bearing framework and street-facing facade textures, with only internal spatial layouts undergoing reorganization and functional restructuring. These measures maximized preservation of the neighborhood's historical character and authentic appearance while avoiding visual disruption. Incorporating courtyard designs as visual focal points and

circulation hubs within commercial spaces not only significantly improved natural lighting and ventilation but also created inviting landscape features that elevated environmental quality.



Source: author

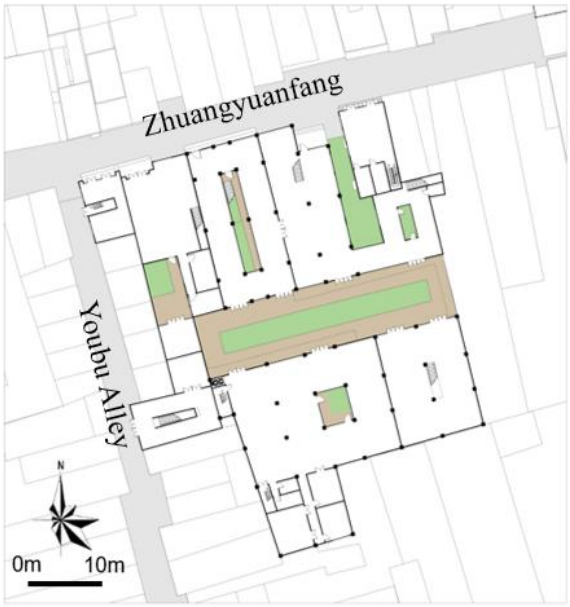
Figure 5-22 Spatial Texture Renovation

5.3.3.2 Functional Integration and Business Model Integration

The current functional layout of the building fails to meet the requirements of centralized commercial exhibition complexes, necessitating a comprehensive redesign of its spatial configuration. Through partial demolition of existing structural elements, the originally elongated and fragmented architectural spaces will be consolidated to optimize internal proportions, enhancing adaptability for diverse functions including retail operations, exhibition displays, and social interactions. Traffic flow patterns will be reorganized to replace the cramped "one building, one elevator" layout, with staircases strategically positioned according to indoor area ratios to ensure efficient spatial distribution throughout the complex. Natural lighting conditions will be maximized through architectural design improvements. Additionally, while preserving and enhancing the original courtyard spaces, auxiliary functional areas of appropriate scale will be established to accommodate office spaces, restrooms, storage facilities, and other supporting infrastructure essential for commercial operations (Figure 5-23a).

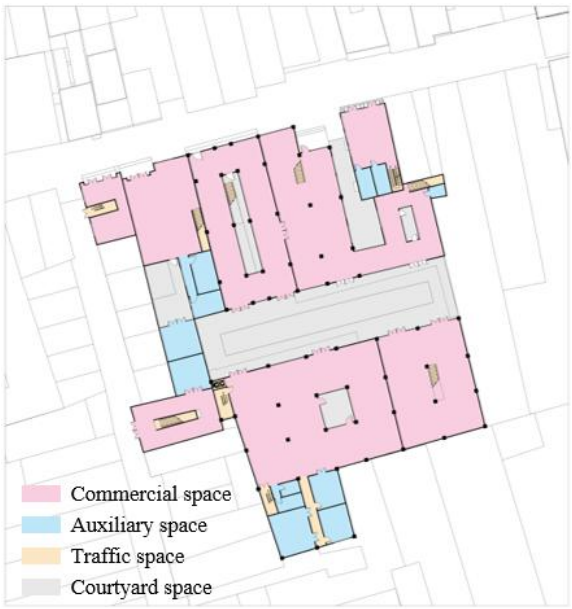
The integrated commercial complex will feature three thematic exhibition zones: the Guangzhou Embroidery Premium Trade Zone, Costume Culture Experience Zone, and Trendy Cultural Innovation Hub. Centered around Zhuangyuanfang's core intangible cultural heritage resources and local creative industries, the area will attract heritage artisans' studios, indigenous designer brands, and cultural innovation stores. Regular events including heritage craft exhibitions, fashion design launches, and business matchmaking sessions will be

organized to boost commercial vitality and appeal. Each themed zone includes interactive zones equipped with display racks, hands-on workstations, and multimedia screens for demonstrations of Guangzhou embroidery techniques, costume try-ons, and DIY cultural craft activities, enhancing consumer engagement and immersive experiences. Social spaces such as lounge seating areas, coffee lounges, and cultural book corners will be strategically placed around courtyards and main entrances, creating multifunctional environments for relaxation, social interaction, and shopping. These designs aim to extend visitor dwell time while improving commercial conversion rates and overall operational value (Figure 5-23b).



Source: author

Figure 5-23a Floor plan



Source: author

Figure 5-23b Functional Layout

5.3.3.3 Continuous commercial interface updates

The comprehensive renovation of the continuous commercial facade (Figure 5-24)on the Zhuangyuanfang Street-facing side of the Exhibition Trade Cluster features an exceptionally transparent floor-to-ceiling glass curtain wall design. This innovative approach enhances visual interaction between the interior architecture and the surrounding street environment, effectively attracting foot traffic into the complex's interior spaces. The facade design also incorporates unified thematic color decorative strips, which not only significantly boost the overall color vibrancy and visual appeal of the exterior but also create a cohesive visual identity for the architectural ensemble in the area.



Source: author

Figure 5-24 Schematic diagram of commercial interface renewal

5.4 Zhuangyuanfang Commercial and Residential Hub

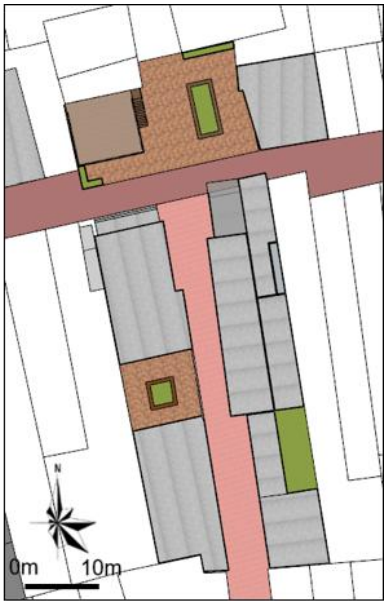
5.4.1 Overview of Node Design

The development cluster is strategically located at the intersection of Zhengshi Street and Zhuangyuanfang, serving as a key transportation hub and functional transition zone. Extending southward from the cluster toward Zhengshi Street, commercial activities gradually diminish while residential functions dominate the northern district. The southern extension connects to the Xianleli Community's ground-floor retail complex, offering diverse commercial scenarios. Current building operations within the cluster feature mixed commercial-residential use, with overall construction quality remaining average(Figure 5-24a, b).

Strategically located at the intersection of Zhengshi Street and Zhuangyuanfang Main Street, this mixed-use commercial-residential hub serves as a transitional node between the district's "core commercial axis" and "residential support zones," while also functioning as a key link connecting the retail cluster in Xianleli Community. Designed as a "human flow buffer space, transitional interface between commerce and neighborhood, and central hub for community engagement," its vision emphasizes spatial openness, multifunctionality, and scenario-based design to create a vibrant "shared gathering space" that blends commercial vitality with community warmth. This innovative approach effectively channels commercial traffic from the main street while meeting residents' daily social needs, achieving seamless integration of "commercial attraction – community interaction – neighborhood services."

The fundamental renovation concept focuses on preserving the building's distinctive spatial positioning within the neighborhood, creating transitional functional nodes while providing public spaces essential for both residential and commercial activities, thereby

serving as buffer zones for pedestrian flow. Secondly, it directs pedestrian traffic from Zhuangyuanfang and Zhengshi Street onto the newly constructed north-south thoroughfare, ultimately guiding the flowlines toward the commercial cluster in Xianleli.



Source: author

Figure 5-24a Plan view of commercial-residential hub



Source: author

Figure 5-24b Axonometric schematic diagram of commercial-residential hub axis

5.4.2 Current Issue Diagnosis

The node currently functions as a mixed-use commercial-residential area, primarily consisting of 2-3 story bamboo tube houses and partial multi-story residences. Key challenges include: 1) Functional overlap – some buildings feature ground-floor commercial spaces (operating low-end retail and convenience services) while upper floors serve residential purposes, creating mutual interference between commercial and residential activities; 2) Spatial fragmentation – disorganized building layouts lacking public open spaces and pedestrian buffer zones, leading to traffic congestion at intersections; 3) Visual inconsistency – severely damaged building facades with unauthorized security installations (e.g., burglar-proof grilles and rolling shutters) that clash with the neighborhood's historical character; 4) Poor circulation efficiency – narrow streets leading to Xianleli are obstructed by street-side vendors, failing to establish effective commercial connectivity (Figure 5-25).

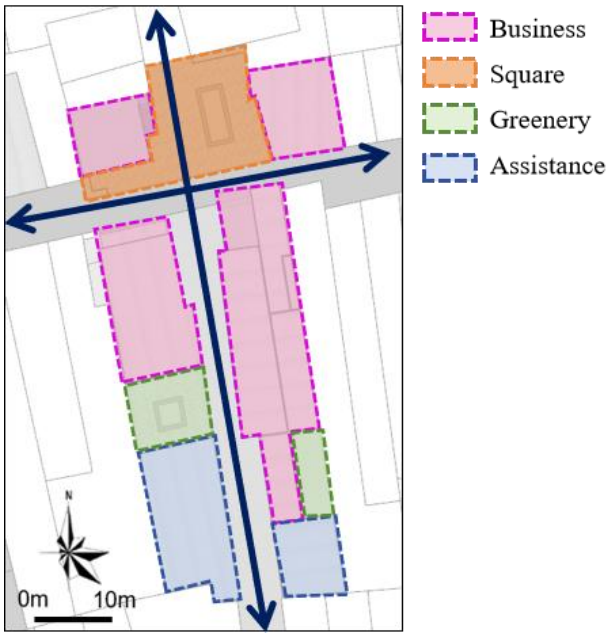


Source: author

Figure 5-25 Current status photo of dynamic gathering venues

5.4.3 Renovation Design Strategy

In terms of spatial planning, selected buildings were demolished to create a plaza that accommodates pedestrian traffic from two adjacent streets, complemented by leisure commercial spaces for public relaxation. The bamboo tube structures at key nodes underwent architectural reconstruction through volume reorganization, courtyard integration, and auxiliary facilities to enhance business environment quality. Creative retail spaces were strategically positioned along both sides of the street leading to Xianleli, guiding visitors through sequential spatial transitions (Figure 5-26).



Source: author

Figure 5-26 Commercial-residential hub functional layout

5.4.3.1 Spatial Openness and Layout Optimization

Two inefficiently vacant bamboo tube houses (totaling approximately 40 square meters) will be demolished at the designated site to create an open public square serving as a central hub for pedestrian circulation and community activities. The square will feature a terrazzo-like pavement with traditional Lingnan-style leisure seating, landscape lighting columns, and cultural exhibition walls showcasing the commercial history and folk traditions of Zhuangyuanfang. Native vegetation such as banyan trees and rhododendrons will be planted around the square to foster a comfortable outdoor environment.

The streets leading to Xianleli Community will be widened to 4 meters, with unauthorized street vending and illegal constructions removed, pavement surfaces upgraded, and directional signage installed to create a seamless pedestrian flow route from Zhuangyuanfang Main Street to Huolijuchang (a vibrant commercial hub) and Xianleli Community Commercial Zone, establishing interconnected commercial pathways. Additionally, the intersection design between Zhengshi Street and Zhuangyuanfang Main Street will be optimized through gentle slope treatment and clear ground markings to enhance walking comfort and safety.

5.4.3.2 Functional Integration and Business Model Integration

Leisure commercial formats are integrated around the public square, including Cantonese sugar water shops, local coffee bars, and cultural innovation convenience stores, with outdoor dining areas and leisure seating provided to create an interactive "square + commerce" scenario that attracts foot traffic. The square regularly hosts small-scale markets, folk performances, and neighborhood activities to revitalize community vitality.

The adaptive renovation of four bamboo tube houses retained around the node was conducted using a "courtyard implantation + functional replacement" strategy. Partial internal partitions were removed to create an inner courtyard, enhancing natural lighting and ventilation. The ground floor was repurposed for creative retail spaces, handicraft workshops, and community services, while the second floor retained limited residential functions with independent vertical circulation systems to achieve integrated commercial-residential coexistence.

A community service station is established on the ground floor of one of the bamboo tube houses, providing convenient services such as express delivery, government affairs agency, and neighborhood mutual assistance. It also serves as the organization and planning center for community activities, enhancing the community attributes of this node.

5.4.3.3 Commercial Interface Guidance

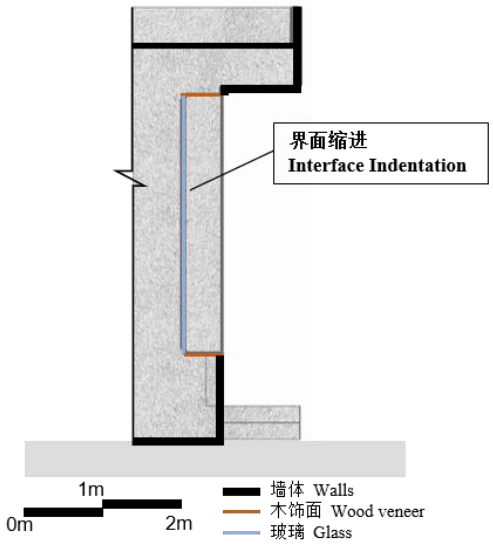
For the continuous commercial street interface located south of the commercial-residential hub, a guidance-oriented renovation strategy will be implemented. While preserving its original functions and architectural character, efforts will focus on enhancing visual transparency and spatial hierarchy of the commercial facade. Specifically, design guidance will encourage partial commercial units to recess their facades moderately (Figure 5-27), creating inviting gray spaces beneath eaves that provide shaded, rain-protected areas for pedestrians to rest. These gray spaces can be integrated with large floor-to-ceiling glass windows, where specially designed robust window frames beneath the sills can be converted into functional outdoor seating. Material selection should prioritize warm-toned wood finishes with soft textures to enhance spatial comfort and natural ambiance.

On the other hand, design actively encourage diverse commercial formats along streets to strategically plan and establish small-scale, well-designed outdoor display areas in front of their storefronts. This initiative must strictly adhere to regulatory standards while ensuring no disruption to essential street traffic flow or public safety. These outdoor spaces can serve as extensions of indoor commercial zones, offering flexible solutions for product displays, customer relaxation areas, or casual dining services. Such arrangements not only enhance the vibrancy of street commerce but also improve pedestrian experience and engagement, ultimately achieving synergistic improvements in both commercial interface vitality and public space quality(Figure 5-28).



Source: author

Figure 5-27 Continuous commercial interface renovation



Source: author

Figure 5-28 Commercial interface design guidance

5.5 Zhangyuanfang-Tiancheng Road Community Integrated Commercial Complex

5.5.1 Node Positioning and Design Principle

The community commercial complex, located along the stretch from Xianle New Street to Tiancheng Road, serves as the "finishing touch" of Zhuangyuanfang neighborhood while acting as a vital link between the residential area and urban infrastructure. Designed as a "convenience-oriented commercial hub, social gathering space for neighbors, and trendy hotspot for young crowds," its core philosophy emphasizes "community-centric planning, prioritizing accessibility, and quality enhancement." Leveraging the public utility nature of ground-floor multi-story residences and appropriately scaled public spaces, the project optimizes functional layouts, elevates architectural aesthetics, and creates harmonious spatial environments. This integrated approach delivers both practical services and premium experiences, meeting daily needs of local residents while infusing youthful energy into the neighborhood, ultimately achieving synergistic development of commercial value and community vitality.

Between Xianle New Street and Tiancheng Road, multi-story residential buildings feature appropriately scaled public spaces, with the ground floors primarily serving communal functions. The original purpose of the ground-floor spaces along Tiancheng Road was to accommodate community commerce.

To connect internal and external streets while linking different building types and volumes within the site, the residential ground floor is enhanced with premium community

retail spaces. Combined with the front plaza on the building's first floor, this creates communal public areas. More community-oriented commercial functions such as cafes and bakeries are introduced to attract young demographics for experiential visits and social interactions.

5.5.2 Current Strengths and Optimization Directions

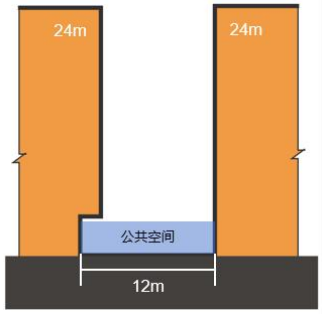
Regarding public spaces, the multi-story residential area east of Xianleli exhibits high occupancy rates with relatively spacious building spacing averaging approximately 12 meters. This configuration provides optimal spatial conditions for developing diverse public facilities and communal spaces. The ground floor of these residences originally served as a pest control station along Renmin Street, featuring community bulletin boards on one side of the building wall for information display. These historical and contemporary elements collectively reinforce the space's strong public character and community service orientation (Figure 5-29a). Geographically, the location offers convenient connectivity: its northern side directly links to a commercial-residential hub, while the eastern side connects to Tiancheng Road's urban interface, effectively accommodating dual user demands from commercial zones and neighboring residents. Additionally, Xianleli maintains a stable population base, with numerous local residents and tenant communities coexisting, fostering sustained daily life activities and convenient consumption needs.

The renovation and optimization of this area will focus on three core aspects: Firstly, upgrading business formats by introducing convenient commercial services and premium-quality offerings that better align with modern community lifestyles and quality demands. Secondly, enhancing spatial integration through comprehensive planning of fragmented plots in residential frontages to create multifunctional, socially interactive shared public spaces. Finally, ensuring architectural harmony by implementing unified facade designs and signage systems, resulting in a cohesive, orderly, and visually appealing commercial interface for the community.



Source: author

Figure 5-29a Photos of Xianleli public space



Source: author

Figure 5-29b Cross-section of public space

5.5.3 Renovation Design Strategy

5.5.3.1 Business Format Optimization and Functional Integration

Preserve and upgrade essential community amenities including premium fresh food supermarkets, neighborhood pharmacies, laundromats, and barbershops. Optimize spatial layouts and enhance service quality to meet residents' daily needs. Introduce trendy establishments favored by younger demographics such as local coffee brands, artisanal bakeries, cultural bookstores, and light dining restaurants, creating community "hotspots" that attract young residents and tourists to linger and spend, revitalizing neighborhood vitality. Incorporate small-scale Cantonese cultural exhibition halls and intangible heritage craft experience stores to showcase Lingnan folk culture and traditional craftsmanship, achieving organic integration of cultural preservation and community commerce. Encourage multi-functional spaces like convenience stores offering parcel collection services, coffee bars featuring community reading corners, and bakeries hosting parent-child DIY activities, maximizing spatial utilization and strengthening commercial-community synergy (Figure 5-30a, b).



Source: author

Figure 5-30a Floor plan of community ground-floor commercial units



Source: author

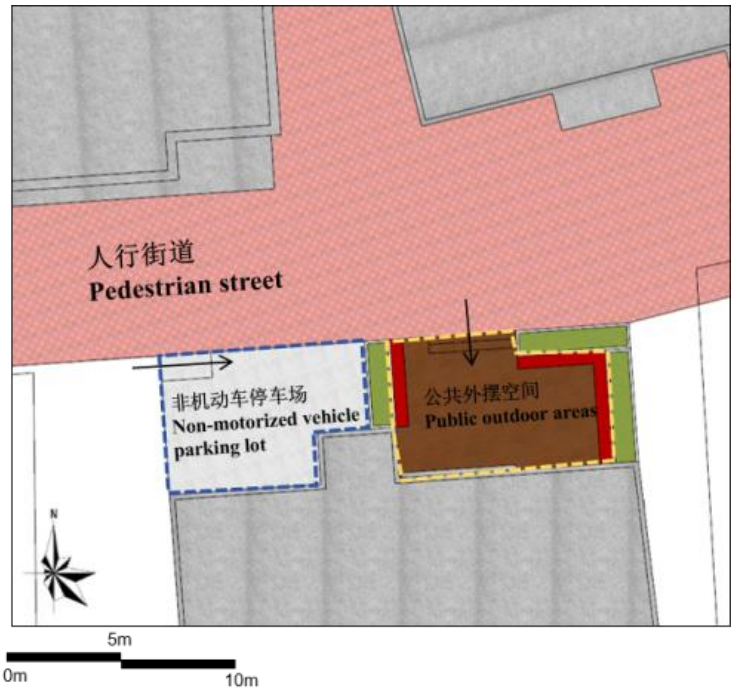
Figure 5-30b Community commercial nodes

5.5.3.2 Spatial Design and Public Openness

The expansive plaza area in front of multi-story residential buildings will be fully utilized to create a multifunctional and vibrant community shared space. Adopting a layout that integrates green landscapes, public outdoor seating areas, and transparent commercial facades, the design features native vegetation adapted to local climate conditions and easy maintenance to foster a natural ecological ambiance. Complemented by leisure benches and outdoor long tables for social gatherings, this space aims to serve as an excellent public venue that facilitates daily neighborhood interactions, offers recreational options, and accommodates various small-scale community events.

A dedicated centralized parking area for non-motorized vehicles will also be established to systematically collect and manage bicycles, electric bicycles, and other non-motorized vehicles within the community. This measure aims to effectively reduce the phenomenon of random vehicle parking and occupation of public pathways, thereby enhancing the cleanliness and order of the community environment.

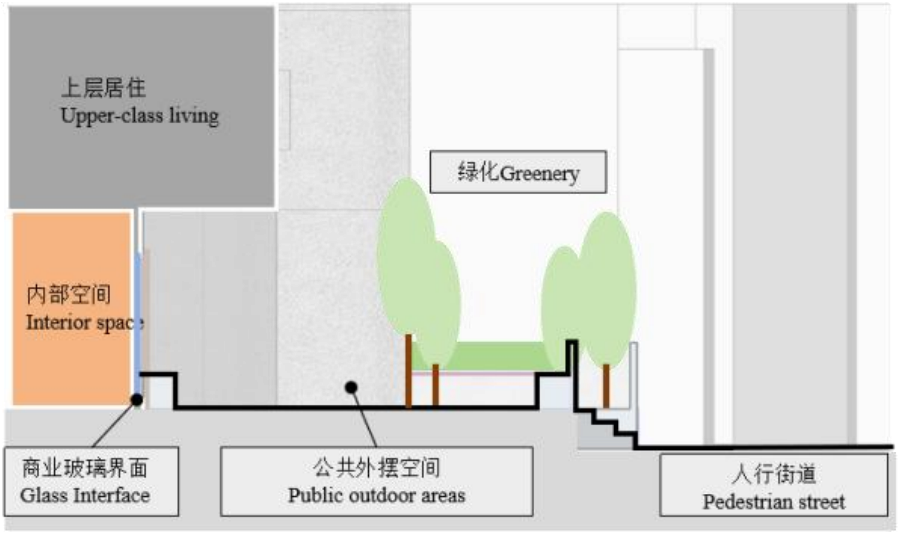
In designing public outdoor areas, we skillfully integrate landscape greening elements and small recreational nodes—such as decorative flower beds, tree pits, and seating areas for brief stops—to create a spatial hierarchy and transition from "commercial storefronts" to "pedestrian walkways" and ultimately to a "central shared plaza (Figure 5-31)."



Source: author

Figure 5-31 Layout of public space in the front plaza of the building's ground floor

Furthermore, the entrance design of commercial spaces on the ground floor of residential buildings has been optimized, predominantly adopting a "compact storefront combined with large-scale transparent display windows" format. This approach maximizes product presentation and interior ambiance, significantly enhancing the visual appeal of commercial units and customer attraction. At prominent locations near each entrance, we will install refined landscape features and clear business signage systems. These elements not only strengthen spatial navigation for residents and visitors but also elevate the overall quality and recognizability of the commercial environment(Figure 5-32).

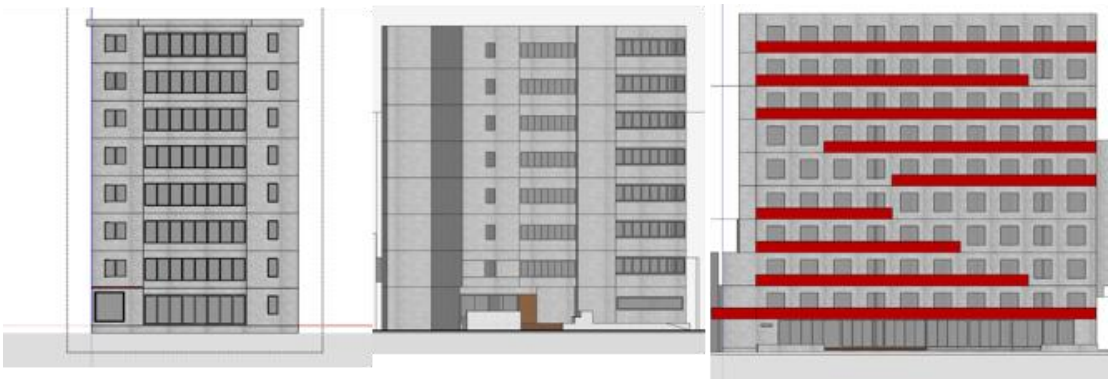


Source: author

Figure 5-32 Public space hierarchy in the front plaza of the building's ground floor

5.5.3.3 Facade Coordination and Facade Design

The ground floor facades (Figure5-33) of multi-story residences underwent comprehensive renovation, featuring plaster walls paired with large-scale glass windows and doors to harmonize with the neighborhood's traditional architectural style. Upper-floor facades were cleaned and repaired, with standardized window frame colors and balcony railing designs to maintain visual coherence. A unified community signage system was implemented, utilizing natural wood materials and traditional calligraphy fonts adorned with Guangzhou embroidery patterns and cultural symbols related to imperial scholars, ensuring clear navigation while enhancing cultural ambiance. Commercial storefronts adopted standardized signage dimensions and styles to minimize commercialization and visual clutter. Sustainable flooring materials like permeable bricks and bluestone slabs were selected to reflect regional characteristics. Landscape lighting employed warm-toned LED fixtures, including courtyard lights, lawn illumination, and wall washers, creating a cozy nighttime atmosphere. Warm lighting in shop windows not only showcased merchandise but also revitalized the street's nighttime vitality.



Source: author

Figure 5-33 Schematic diagram of facade restoration

5.6 Summary of This Chapter

Building upon the locality-based renewal strategy proposed in Chapter 4, this chapter implements the approach through core commercial space design. The core design philosophy — "respecting architectural texture, integrating spatial continuity, connecting cultural narratives, and fostering symbiotic prosperity" — is established. The study scope narrows to focus on commercial design, with Zhuangyuanfang Street serving as the central

design object while extending outward to create a core commercial axis and community commercial belt. Commercial spaces are functionally categorized into three main types: cultural-tourism commercial formats, creative office spaces, and lifestyle retail areas, with renovation scope limited to ground/floor levels. Macro-level public space design controls define key commercial interfaces and open public areas, encouraging detailed management of street-facing commercial facades. For pedestrian flow and traffic organization, a three-tiered network structure ("main street axis + secondary alleyways + node hubs") is implemented. The Zhuangyuanfang main axis serves as the primary pedestrian corridor, supported by auxiliary alleyways to enhance neighborhood accessibility, with plaza nodes strategically placed to manage crowd density.

Guided by macro-level principles, this chapter presents four localized node development approaches. The four key sites—Zhuangyuanfang Historical and Cultural Exhibition Center, Zhuangyuanfang Guangzhou Embroidery Exhibition and Trade Cluster, Zhuangyuanfang Commercial-Housing Vitality Hub, and Zhuangyuanfang-Tiancheng Road Community Integrated Commercial Zone—form a cohesive spatial sequence that enhances continuous pedestrian experience.

Zhuangyuanfang Comprehensive Cultural and Creative Market stands as the first landmark eastward from the entrance archway of Renmin South Road in Zhuangyuanfang Subdistrict, serving as the opening chapter of its spatial sequence. This architectural complex comprises three key components: the Zhuangyuanfang Historical and Cultural Exhibition Hall, an intangible cultural heritage-themed creative store, and a creative retail space. The design philosophy focuses on cultivating a cultural-commercial ambiance at the subdistrict's entrance. Through functional reconfiguration of ground-floor residential units and adaptive retrofitting of traditional bamboo tube house structures using modular construction techniques, the project seamlessly integrates Zhuangyuanfang's local historical heritage into spatial design while boosting commercial vitality through cultural product sales.

The Zhuangyuanfang Guangxiu Exhibition and Trade Complex serves as the core hub of Zhuangyuanfang Subdistrict, developed through the integration of renovated bamboo tube houses. Its design philosophy focuses on preserving the original topological texture of the bamboo structures while merging internal spaces to create expansive exhibition and trading areas. The project replaces traditional spot wholesale models with innovative commercial formats, reconfiguring interior layouts with strategically placed vertical circulation systems and auxiliary spaces. Facade renovations enhance transparency, meeting essential lighting and

ventilation requirements while boosting commercial vitality and spatial appeal.

The Zhuangyuanfang Commercial-Housing Vitality Hub is strategically located at the intersection of Zhengshi Street (north-south axis) and Zhuangyuanfang (east-west axis), serving as a transitional node between residential and commercial functions in the neighborhood. Its core design philosophy focuses on creating dual pedestrian flow gathering spaces, with commercial installations along the street directing foot traffic toward the southern roadway and into the final development zone. The primary approach involves demolishing partial structures to establish a public gathering square, while opening up the facades of long bamboo tube houses along the street as transparent commercial interfaces. This innovative solution successfully transitions residential functions, cultural tourism commerce, and community commerce into an integrated urban ecosystem.

The Zhuangyuanfang-Tiancheng Road Community has integrated commercial spaces by leveraging its multi-story residential clusters and expansive communal areas. The project has completed first-floor renovations of four apartment buildings to create a transparent, welcoming commercial environment that channels foot traffic from Zhuangyuanfang. This flow is ultimately directed to the Tiancheng Road exit of Zhuangyuanfang Street, completing the spatial sequence. The recessed first-floor design establishes compact yet refined outdoor spaces under eaves. While meeting essential residential needs, the development introduces curated community commerce to attract visitors for sightseeing and socializing, enhancing neighborhood vitality and fostering integration between local residents and newcomers.

Conclusion and Prospects

1.Main Conclusion

This study focuses on Zhuangyuanfang District in Guangzhou, employing a place-based perspective and theoretical analysis to explore universally applicable renewal strategies for commercial historical districts. Key findings can be summarized as follows:

(1) This study derives a general method and framework for identifying the local characteristics of commercial historical districts, identifying these characteristics from four aspects: historical context, distinctive business formats, physical spatial features, and social networks. Based on this framework, and combined with field surveys and mapping analysis, the current state of the districts is analyzed.

(2) Analysis of the current situation of Zhuangyuanfang Street reveals the general problems of localized renewal of commercial historical blocks. The renewal and transformation of commercial historical blocks face four main problems: partial destruction of the original local spatial form, gradual disappearance of the original local business formats, disconnect between local cultural heritage and contemporary needs, and disintegration of the original local social network.

(3) Taking the current problems of Zhuangyuanfang Street as an example, this paper analyzes typical commercial historical street renewal cases and derives general methods for the renewal of commercial historical streets from a site-specific perspective. The key is the inheritance-oriented restoration of local spatial characteristics, including the continuation of historical context, the protective cultivation of distinctive business formats, and the inclusive renewal of social networks..

2.Innovation Points

(1) Integrated Innovation in Research Perspectives: Characteristic Identification of Commercial Historic Districts Based on the Logic of "Locality"

Traditional historical district revitalization approaches often prioritize either the physical preservation of architectural heritage or purely commercial development. The innovation of this study lies in systematically integrating the "Locality" theory into the framework for commercial historical district renewal. By synthesizing four dimensions — spatial texture, historical context, distinctive business formats, and social networks — a multidimensional revitalization evaluation and strategy model has been established. This framework provides a new logical approach to balancing the "cultural authenticity" and "commercial vitality" of

historical districts.

(2) Integrative Approach to Research and Analysis Methods: Coupling Analysis of Spatial Characteristics and Social Networks

The study not only examines the physical architecture of Zhuangyuanfang (including arcade structures and bamboo tube houses), but also delves into the hidden social networks and intangible cultural elements within the neighborhood. Through research on the inclusiveness of social networks in Zhuangyuanfang, it integrates human cultural activities with spatial design strategies. This approach of extending research from material spaces to social spaces enhances the granularity and persuasiveness of current situation analyses.

(3) Refined Implementation of the Update Model: Dynamic Feedback from Macro Strategies to Micro Nodes

This study transcended macro-level strategic guidance by establishing a closed-loop research framework through a tiered transformation process: "design guidelines → functional clusters → specific nodes." It innovatively proposed targeted renewal solutions such as the "Guangzhou Embroidery Exhibition & Trade Cluster" and "Commercial-Housing Hub," integrating the local preservation of traditional craftsmanship (Guangzhou Embroidery) with modern experiential consumption scenarios. The shift from theoretical deduction to precision "acupuncture-style" design provides actionable reference models for micro-renovation initiatives in high-density historic urban commercial districts.

3. Research Prospect

Through theoretical framework development, strategy formulation, and empirical validation, this study provides a systematic solution for localized revitalization of commercial historical and cultural districts. However, there remains room for further refinement and expansion:

In terms of research scope, future studies could expand the geographical coverage of empirical cases by selecting commercial historical districts from diverse regions such as Jiangnan water towns and northern ancient cities for comparative analysis. This approach would help examine how adaptation strategies for localized renewal differ under varying natural geographical environments and cultural contexts, thereby enhancing the universality and specificity of policy frameworks. The ultimate goal is to establish a revitalization theory framework that integrates regional differentiation with unified core principles.

In terms of research methodology, quantitative research approaches can be adopted to enhance the evaluation of policy effectiveness. By utilizing techniques such as spatial syntax

analysis and big data analytics, key indicators including spatial vitality, pedestrian flow density, and commercial mix compatibility in neighborhoods before and after renovation strategies can be quantitatively assessed. This establishes a dual research framework combining qualitative analysis with quantitative validation to improve policy scientific rigor and precision. Concurrently, long-term tracking surveys should be integrated to monitor the sustainable operational outcomes of renovation strategies, thereby optimizing dynamic adjustment mechanisms.

In terms of technological integration, we can explore deep integration between digital technologies and localized renewal. For instance, VR/AR technology can be utilized to recreate historical scenes of Zhuangyuanfang and document the transmission process of Guangzhou embroidery craftsmanship. Big data monitoring can track commercial vitality and community activities within neighborhoods, while digital platforms can establish participatory governance channels connecting businesses and residents. This approach achieves an innovative development path that combines "local cultural preservation with modern technological empowerment."

In terms of policy coordination, future efforts should focus on strengthening the alignment between research findings and local historical-cultural preservation policies. Proposed renewal strategies and governance models should be translated into actionable policy recommendations and planning guidelines, facilitating the transition of academic research from theoretical exploration to practical application. This approach will provide more robust support for the development of historic and cultural cities and the high-quality revitalization of existing urban spaces in China.

Reference

Monograph

[1] 段进. 城市空间发展论 [M]. 南京:江苏科学技术出版社, 1998.

[2] 孙一民等. 江门长堤历史街区[M]. 广州:华南理工大学大学出版社, 2016

[3] 王建国. 城市设计[M]. 南京:东南大学出版社, 2011.

[4] [日]芦原义信. 外部空间设计[M]. 南京:江苏凤凰文艺出版社, 尹培桐译. 2017

[5] Ferdinand Tönnies. Community and Civil Society[M]. East Lansing:Michigan State University Press, 1957.

[6] Yi-Fu Tuan. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience[M]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.1977.

[7] Martin Heidegger. Being and Time[M]. Singapore: Macquarrie & Robinson.1962.

[8] Roland Robertson. Encyclopedia of Globalization[M]. London: Routledge.2006.

[9] Simmel, G. The sociology of space[M]. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.1997.

[10] Alexander Tzonis, Liane Lefaivre. Critical Regionalism: Architecture and the Identity of a Globalized World[M]. Munich: Prestel Press. 2003.

[11] Kenneth Frampton. Towards a Critical Regionalism.:Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance[M]. Seattle:Bay Press.1983

[12] Frampton K. Modern Architecture: A Critical History(Fourth Edition)[M]. London: Thames & Hudson, 2011

[13] Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa,Murray Silverstein, et al. A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction[M]. Oxford University Press. 1977

[14] Camillo Sitte. The Art of Building Cities[M]. Translated by Charles T. Stewart. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1945

[15] Jane Jacobs. The Death and Life of Great American Cities [M]. New York: Random House, 1961.

[16] Charles Jencks. The Language of Post-Modern Architecture[M]. London: Academy Editions, 1977

[17] Steven Tiesdell. Revitalizing Historic Urban Quarters[M]. Oxford: Architectural Press, 1996

[18] Clive Moughtin. Urban Design: Street and Square[M]. Oxford: Architectural Press, 2003.

[19] Kevin Lynch. The image of the city[M]. Cambridge:MIT Press, 1960

[20] Norberg-Schulz C. Genius loci: towards a phenomenology of architecture[M]. SHI Zhiming, translate.Wuhan: Huazhong University of Science & Technology Press, 2010.

Journal

[21] 罗时玮. 当建筑与时间做朋友:近二十年的台湾在地建筑论述[J]. 建筑学报, 2013, (04): 1-7.

[22] 罗时玮. 批判的田园主义黄声远(田中央)团队的建筑在地实践[J]. 时代建筑, 2011, (05): 58-61.

[23] 韩冬青. 在地建造如何成为问题[J]. 新建筑, 2014, (01): 34-35.

[24] 段进, 殷铭, 陶岸君, 等. “在地性”保护：特色村镇保护与改造的认知转向、实施路径和制度建议[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2021, (02): 25-32.

[25] 邵润青, 段进,姜莹, 等. 空间基因:推动总体城市设计在地性的新方法[J]. 规划师,2020,36(11): 33-39.

[26] 段进, 邵润青, 兰文龙, 等. 空间基因[J]. 城市规划, 2019, 43(02): 14-21.

[27] 段进. 空间基因传承——连接历史与未来的营城新法[J]. 世界建筑, 2023, (10): 5-10+4.

[28] 龙灏, 薛珂. 面向全球化的未来在地建造探讨[J]. 世界建筑, 2021, (06): 10-13+126.

[29] 赵炜. 在地性城市更新聚焦微观精准施策[J]. 新型城镇化, 2025, (05): 13.

[30] 黄瓴, 尹雪梅. 山地城市社区儿童活动行为与空间关联性研究——以重庆渝中区上大田湾社区为例[J]. 城市规划, 2022, 46(01): 87-98+120.

[31] 刘塔, 郑志. 在地行走——基于功能湿地理念的校园规划[J]. 新建筑, 2014, (01): 36-39.

[32] 何依, 孙亮, 许广通. 基于历史文脉的传统村落保护研究——以宁波市走马塘村保护规划实施导则为例[J]. 小城镇建设, 2017, (09): 11-17.

[33] 刘思齐, 余燚. 空间基因技术在中观城市设计中的应用研究——以成都少城更新设计为例[J]. 中外建筑, 2022, (05): 27-35.

[34] 娄培培. “在地建造”——当代建筑师的实践探索[J]. 建筑与文化, 2020, (05): 200-201.

[35] 阮仪三, 孙萌. 我国历史街区保护与规划的若干问题研究[J]. 城市规划, 2001, (10): 25-32.

[36] 邹兵. 增量规划向存量规划转型:理论解析与实践应对[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2015, (05): 12-19.

[37] 王景慧. 历史地段保护的概念和作法[J]. 城市规划, 1998, (03): 34-36+63.

[38] 阮仪三, 顾晓伟. 对于我国历史街区保护实践模式的剖析[J]. 同济大学学报(社会科

学版), 2004, (05): 1-6.

[39] 董玛力, 陈田, 王丽艳. 西方城市更新发展历程和政策演变[J]. 人文地理, 2009, 24(05): 42-46.

[40] 阳建强. 中国城市更新的现况、特征及趋向[J]. 城市规划, 2000, (04): 53-55 + 63-64.

[41] 丁凡, 伍江. 城市更新相关概念的演进及在当今的现实意义[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2017, (06): 87-95.

[42] 单霁翔. 城市文化遗产保护与文化城市建设[J]. 城市规划, 2007, (05): 9-23.

[43] 陈仲光, 徐建刚, 蒋海兵. 基于空间句法的历史街区多尺度空间分析研究——以福州三坊七巷历史街区为例[J]. 城市规划, 2009, 33(08): 92-96.

[44] 阮仪三. 历史街区的保护及规划[J]. 城市规划汇刊, 2000, (02): 46-47+50-80.

[45] 李晨. “历史文化街区”相关概念的生成、解读与辨析[J]. 规划师, 2011, 27(04): 100-103.

[46] 张松. 作为人居形式的传统村落及其整体性保护[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2017, (02): 44-49.

[47] 吴丽佳. 历史街区小规模、渐进式更新理论探析[J]. 科技信息(学术研究), 2008, (13): 28-29+31.

[48] 马宏, 应孔晋. 社区空间微更新上海城市有机更新背景下社区营造路径的探索[J]. 时代建筑, 2016, (04): 10-17.

[49] 李彦伯. 城市“微更新”刍议兼及公共政策、建筑学反思与城市原真性[J]. 时代建筑, 2016, (04): 6-9.

[50] 王承华, 张进帅, 姜劲松. 微更新视角下的历史文化街区保护与更新——苏州平江历史文化街区城市设计[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2017, (06): 96-104.

[51] 吴良镛. “抽象继承”与“迁想妙得”——历史地段的保护、发展与新建筑创作[J]. 建筑学报, 1993, (10): 21-24.

[52] 阳建强, 陈月. 1949-2019 年中国城市更新的发展与回顾[J]. 城市规划, 2020, 44(02): 9-19+31.

[53] 周源, 温春阳, 袁南华. 商业步行街设计与历史街区保护——以柳州曙光路改造为例[J]. 规划师, 2003, (09): 21-23.

[54] 阮仪三, 蔡晓丰, 杨华文.修复肌理重塑风貌——南浔镇东大街“传统商业街区”风貌整治探析[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2005, (04): 53-55.

[55] 张蕾, 蔡泰成. 城市历史商业街区的发展策略——以广州“状元坊”历史商业街区

为例[J]. 建设科技, 2010, (09): 82-83.

[56] 邓舒珊, 蔡萌, 田银生. 广州状元坊传统街区商贸空间形态演变与动力机制研究[J]. 南方建筑, 2017, (02): 72-78.

[57] 朱知麟, 田银生. 量化分析方法在康泽恩城市形态学中的运用探索——以广州传统街区为例[J]. 南方建筑, 2022, (09): 8-18.

[58] 顾书娟. 清代广州十三行贸易与广绣发展关系研究[J]. 学术研究, 2018, (02): 126-134+178.

[59] 岭南. 广绣戏服与状元坊戏服品牌的形成[J]. 南国红豆, 2007, (06): 48-50.

[60] 罗国铭. 基于重现城市活力视角下的城市更新策略浅析——以广州状元坊历史街区更新为例[J]. 城市建筑, 2019, 16(35): 23-24.

[61] 张春阳. 以城市设计改善和提升城市空间质量[J]. 南方建筑, 2012, (04): 20-24.

[62] 潘福麟. 状元坊广绣戏服——谈粤剧服装艺术(二)[J]. 南国红豆, 1998, (03): 38-40.

[63] 金祥福. 前店后铺的状元坊戏服[J]. 南国红豆, 2012, (05): 39-42.

[64] 马鑫鑫. 老城区传统商业街区复兴路径探析[J]. 山西建筑, 2018, 44(07): 17-18.

[65] 张展鹏, 周剑云. 城市传统商业空间的探讨与更新策略研究——以广州状元坊为例[J]. 智能建筑与智慧城市, 2020, (03): 95-98.

[66] 田银生. “新竹筒屋”与广州传统城市形态的治理 [J]. 南方建筑, 2020(5): 78-83

[67] 黄慧佳, 程千晔. 岭南文化视角下手工艺非遗的活态传承——基于广州戏服制作技艺的调研分析[J]. 中国地名, 2019, (12): 55-56.

[68] 李锦生, 石晓冬, 阳建强, 等. 城市更新策略与实施工具[J]. 城市规划, 2022, 46(03): 22-28.

[69] 石坚. 保护城市历史,延续城市文脉[J]. 规划师, 2003, (07): 19-20.

[70] 姚士谋, 顾朝林, Kamwing Cheng. 南京大都市空间演化与地域结构发展策略[J]. 地理学与国土研究, 2001, (03): 7-11.

[71] 严国泰, 朱夕冰.历史街区“文脉”保护规划研究——解读苏州平江历史街区文化遗产[J]. 中国园林, 2014, 30(11): 82-84.

[72] 邓艳. 基于历史文脉的滨水旧工业区改造和利用——新加坡河区域的更新策略研究[J]. 现代城市研究, 2008, (08): 25-32.

[73] 周向频, 唐静云. 历史街区的商业开发模式及其规划方法研究——以成都锦里、文殊坊、宽窄巷子为例[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2009, (05): 107-113.

[74] 杜春兰. 地区特色与城市形态研究[J]. 重庆建筑大学学报, 1998, (03): 26-29.

[75] 丁沃沃, 刘青昊. 城市物质空间形态的认知尺度解析[J]. 现代城市研究, 2007, (08): 32-41.

[76] 程亮. 城市化进程中的历史街区有机更新——以西宁东关清真大寺周边街区改造为例[J]. 规划师, 2014, 30(S4): 78-82.

[77] 蔡云楠, 杨宵节, 李冬凌. 城市老旧小区“微改造”的内容与对策研究[J]. 城市发展研究,2 017, 24(04): 29-34.

[78] 比尔·希列尔, 盛强. 空间句法的发展现状与未来[J]. 建筑学报, 2014, (08): 60-65.

[79] 胡莹, 张霖. 传统街巷空间意象的延续[J]. 规划师, 2003, (06): 36-39.

[80] 孙施文, 周宇. 上海田子坊地区更新机制研究[J]. 城市规划学刊, 2015, (01): 39-45.

[81] 陶希东. 中国城市旧区改造模式转型策略研究——从“经济型旧区改造”走向“社会型城市更新”[J]. 城市发展研究, 2015, 22(04): 111-116+124.

[82] 方茂青, 黄向阳. 基于文脉的历史文化街区空间活力营造研究——以临海古城十伞巷街区改造为例[J]. 建筑与文化, 2019, (12): 127-128.

[83] 曹宛鹏, 杨永春, 刘静玉, 等. 基于文脉主义的历史古城城市中轴线活化研究——以开封城市中轴线为例[J]. 现代城市研究, 2020, (01): 9-16.

[84] 丁少平, 孙明胜. 地域文脉传承视角下历史街区建筑风貌更新的类型化策略浅析——以浚县历史文化名城南北大街为例[J]. 工业建筑, 2022, 52(06): 47-54.

[85] 周武忠, 蒋晖. 基于历史文脉的城市更新设计略论[J]. 中国名城, 2020, (01): 4-11.

[86] 赵鹏军, 马博闻. 基于场地感受的历史街区更新文脉影响研究——以北京前门大栅栏地区为例[J]. 城市发展研究, 2015, 22(03): 63-72.

[87] 边宝莲, 曹昌智. 历史文化名城的形态保护与文脉传承[J].城市发展研究, 2009, 16(11): 133-138+132.

[88] 李勤, 闫永强, 周帆, 等. 在地性视角下的乡村度假村风貌营造策略探析——以柞水县香炉沟村某度假村为例[J]. 小城镇建设, 2021, 39(05): 57-65.

[89] A·弗雷德曼 ,K·齐默宁 ,O·佐布 , et al.环境设计评估的结构—过程方法(续)[J]. 新建筑, 1990, (03): 75-78.

[90] 张松. 日本历史环境保护的理论与实践[J].清华大学学报(自然科学版), 2000, (S1): 44-48.

[91] 李箭飞, 冯艳君. 基于现代物流的中心城区专业批发市场物流模式探索 ——以广州

市一德路批发市场为例[J]. 物流技术, 2015, (34): 66-71

[92] Zhang L,Miao Y ,Alessandro B .How Can Crowd Perception Methodologies Be Employed to Understand the Locality Characteristics of Small Towns Within the Jiangnan Water Network? From the Perspective of Urban – Rural – Wildland Integration[J]. Buildings, 2026, 16(6): 1214-1214.

[93] Ilkovič J ,Ilkovičová Ľ .The Potential and Usage of the Architectural Heritage of Mining Sites: Case Studies in the Locality of Rudňany, Slovakia[J]. Buildings, 2025, 15(19): 3468-3468.

[94] Yang W ,Huang Y ,Gao J , et al.Locality under the deepening reach of the state: The industrial park regeneration in Quanzhou city[J]. Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space,2025, 43(4): 637-654.

[95] Margiotta S , Sansò P . Historical Evolution of the Salento Leccese Coastal Landscape (Southern Apulia, Italy)[J]. Geosciences,2025, 15(2): 66-66.

[96] Tao S,Duan W .A Post-Evaluation Study on the Renewal of Public Space in Qianmen Street of Beijing's Central Axis Based on Grounded Theory[J]. Buildings, 2024, 14(12): 3969-3969.

[97] Ersoy S ,Taş N ,Taş M .Determining the Scale to Ensure Locality and a Sense of Belonging in the Housing Redevelopment Process: Bursa Hürriyet Neighborhood Field Study[J]. Sustainability, 2023, 16(1)

[98] Tuan Y F. Sense of place: what does it mean to be human?[J]. American journal of theology & philosophy, 1997: 47-58.

[99] Bodker S. Creating conditions for participation: conflicts and resources in systems development[J]. Human – computer interaction, 1996, 11(03): 215-236.

[100] Drain A, ShekaR A, Grigg N. Insights, solutions and empowerment: a framework for evaluating participatory design[J]. CoDesign, 2018, 17(01): 1-2.

[101] LI J, krishnamurthy S, Roders A P,et al.Community participation in cultural heritage management: A systematic literature review comparing Chinese and international practices[J]. Cities, 2020(01): 1-9.

[102] Softaoğlu H. Scrutinising the Production of Space on The Example of Regent Street and Painting A Modern Life by the Agencies of Regency[J]. Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs, 3(3), 51-66.

[103] Harrison,S. Regent Street: A Model of Urban Design in London.Architectural Journal[J]. 2000, 22(4): 1-15.

[104] Carter T. From Nash to Now: The Evolution of Regent Street and its Influence on Global Urban Planning[J]. Urban Studies Review, 2008, 15(3): 45-59.

[105] Farrell T. The Development of Commercial Streets in the 19th Century: The Case of Regent Street.[J]. Journal of Urban Design, 2012, 18(2): 111-130.

Dissertation

[106] 张明欣. 经营城市历史街区[D]. 上海:同济大学,2007.

[107] 满棠. 广州市越秀传统商业区尺度分析及演变研究[D]. 广州:华南理工大学,2013.

[108] 邓舒珊. 管理单元与历史城镇的有机更新初探[D]. 广州:华南理工大学,2017.

[109] 佘亘晋.类型形态学在有机更新方法中的应用研究[D]. 广州:华南理工大学,2018.

Website

[110] 建设部, 国家文物局. 历史文化名城保护规划编制要求.建规[1994] 533 号[EB/OL]. http://www.china-up.com:8080/statute/showstatute.asp?id=5146.

[111] [DB/OL]. https://www.mohurd.gov.cn/gongkai/zhengce/zhengcefilelib/201902/2019022 8_239602.html.

[112] ICOMOS.The Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas.2011.https://civvih.icomos.org/

Others

[113] 中共中央办公厅. 关于在城乡建设中加强历史文化保护传承的意见[Z]. 北京: 中共中央办公厅. 2021.

[114] 新华社. 关于持续推进城市更新行动的意见[Z]. 北京:新华社 2025.

[115] 中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部. 关于在实施城市更新行动中防止大拆大建问题的通知[Z]. 北京:中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部. 2021.

[116] 中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部. 历史文化名城保护规划标准[S]. 北京:中华人民共和国住房和城乡建设部 2022.

[117] 广州市规划和自然资源局. 广州市城市更新专项规划（2021—2035 年）[R]. 广州: 广州市规划和自然资源局. 2011

[118] 广州市规划和自然资源局.越秀区高质量城市更新专项规划（2023—2035 年）征求意见稿[R]. 广州:广州市规划和自然资源局. 2022.

[119] 广州市规划和自然资源局. 广州市历史文化名城保护规划（2021-2035 年）[R]. 广

州:广州市规划和自然资源局. 2022.

[120] 广州市规划和自然资源局.广州市人民南历史文化街区保护规划（2021-2035 年）[R]. 广州:广州市规划和自然资源局. 2021.

[121] 中华人民共和国全国人民代表大会常务委员会.中华人民共和国非物质文化遗产法[EB/OL].2011.

[122] 川越一番街町並み委員会.町づくり規範 [R]. 川越: 川越一番街商業協同組合, 1988.

[123] 川越市. 第 2 期川越市歴史的風致維持向上計画 [R].川越: 川越市都市景観課, 2020.

[124] 川越市. 第 2 期川越市中心市街地活性化基本計画 [R]. 川越: 川越市, 2015.

[125] 国土交通省.歴史的町並みを生かした商店街の活性化～美しい町並み景観の形成と中心商店街の活性化の組合せ～[R]. 東京: 国土交通省, 2009.

[126] 北海道開発協会.自主協定の景観ルールで町並み保存～埼玉県川越市・一番街商店街の取り組みを中心に～[R]. 札幌:北海道開発協会, 2011.

[127] City of westminister.Appendix 1 - Regent Street Public Realm Vision Report [R]. The crown estate, 2024

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	相当于学位论文的哪一部分（章、节）	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

时光荏苒，眨眼便是三年。回望这这三年，除了在学术上收获颇丰外，更是完成了人生的转折。

首先十分感谢一直给予我无限支持的家人，感谢母亲阳慧女士永远支持我学术深造以及职业选择，感谢外婆刘伏莲女士一直以我为骄傲。是你们的支持才使得我有成为我的可能，谨记着你们“幸福是奋斗出来的”谆谆教诲。

衷心感谢导师组里的每一位老师，感谢魏成老师对我论文的悉心指导，帮我构建论文框架，为我的论文写作指点迷津；感谢苏平老师在设计课上的悉心指导；感谢POLITO的老师们，为我打开新的视角。同时，感谢李春老师在教务工作中的辛勤付出，使得每个毕业环节可以顺利进行。

特别感谢我的女友刘秋岑，幸得有你的陪伴，更激发出我对未来生活场景的理想，并不断为之努力。我是一个比较容易感到压力的人，感谢你一直相信我的能力、在找工作以及论文写作时也一直坚信我可以，我希望未来我们可以一同实现我们想要的生活，获得平静、稳定与幸福。

感谢研究生阶段相遇相知的同学、好友。在都灵班的日子绝对是一份特别的共享回忆，在异国，我们度过了难忘的圣诞与春节。感谢喻琬淇同学不厌其烦地为我奔走各类毕业流程，有幸与你共享一些深度对话以及欧洲旅行的快乐时光；感谢方栩彬同学，从本科到研究生，从郑大到华工，从搭档到校友，一直让我在华工校园里觉得无比亲切。同时，感谢班长邢泽蓉，总是耐心地帮大家解决一切毕业的流程问题。

感谢在杭州实习一年来遇到的工作伙伴们，你们的鼓励以及帮助让我在求职上有了很不错的成果。感谢杨柳莹，一直鼓励我是一个有insight的人，肯定我的工作能力；感谢我的mentor小熊在实际工作中对我工作细节的校正与指导，帮我去奔走推荐，抽空指导我的面试，非常幸运能够成为你们的工作伙伴以及朋友。

现在我想说我是个运气还不错的人，因为有你们这样的家人、伴侣、朋友、同学，让我在人生的低谷中一次又一次燃起信心，也希望你们也一直好运、工作顺利、生活幸福。

李诗沁

5月14日于杭州家中

档案目录序号：3

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）

论文选题基于我国城市更新与历史文化保护传承的时代背景，聚焦商业型历史文化街区同质化、文化空心化等共性困境，以广州状元坊为实证对象，具有较好的地域针对性和现实意义。

论文以在地性为核心视角，整合城市形态类型学、有机更新等理论，结合实地调研与案例借鉴，提出了更新的策略方法，为高密度老城商业街区更新方法提供了一定的借鉴思路，达到硕士学位论文答辩要求。

答辩过程中，作者表达流畅，能较好阐述论文的观点，较准确回应答辩委员提出的问题。根据投票结果，答辩委员会一致同意李诗沁同学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）		
		Mauro Berta（线上）	
答辩秘书签名			