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# **Comprehensive Policies and Designs for Urban Villages: The Renewal and Transformation of Jixiang Village within the Framework of China's Spatial Planning**

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## 致谢

时光很快又很慢；快到几年好似一瞬间，眨眼就完了；慢到凌晨的失眠，一秒变成了十几秒，而论文则为这几年的留学生活画上了句号。我好像爱丽丝掉入了一个“梦境”，梦里是另一个世界，我在这里学会了勇敢、表达自我、接纳自我。

在这里，我曾流泪过、无助过、害怕过，但快乐也是前所未有的。感谢这一切，我变得更加丰盈。

论文完成，如同梦醒前的破晓。还没结束，已然开始怀念都灵的一切；却又生出想要快点回家的期盼。也许归国后，我将回到那个现实世界，与都灵日常的一切渐渐失去联系，但这里发生的一切，已潜移默化地融入我的生命，成为一份关于探险与自由的精神食粮，永远鼓舞着我。

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This thesis is dedicated to Turin, and to this unique dream.

**Abstract:**

This thesis focuses on the redevelopment of urban villages. The aim is to explore alternative approaches beyond complete demolition. It seeks to uncover the positive aspects of urban villages and their contributions to society. The study employs extensive reading to understand the basic background of urban villages, including their emergence and related institutional frameworks. Real-world urban villages were selected for online surveys and on-site visits. Redevelopment policies tailored to the specific characteristics of each village are then proposed. The innovation of this paper lies in combining the redevelopment of urban villages with policy, implementing policies at different scales, from high to low, in specific areas. This closely integrates the redevelopment of urban villages with urban planning, meeting policy requirements.

**Keywords:**

Dual urban and rural system, Urban Village, China territorial spatial planning

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## Introduction

### 1. Research Topic

The thesis's major topic is urban villages in China; in order to cover this issue, other questions need to be investigated. For example, what is the primary motive for creating the urban village? The major institute is the urban-rural dual system and Hukou, and from a historical perspective, we can see how different periods of urban planning policy influenced the development of urban villages. And, using existing urban policy—territorial spatial planning—to determine the urban village development policy.

### 2. Research Question

The research question is “Is there another possibility for the transformation of urban villages?

The sub-questions that are aimed to be mentioned can be listed as the following:

- What causes the emergence of urban villages?
- The impact of urban policies in different periods on urban villages.
- Why do urban villages need to be renovated? Who is driving it? Who are the beneficiaries?
- Different views on the transformation of urban villages?
- What is the impact of current planning policies on urban villages?

### 3. Structure of the Research & Roadmap for the Reader

The thesis is divided into five parts. The first part has two chapters, which respectively tell the history of urban renewal in China, the development of urban villages under the policy background of different periods; and the systems most closely related to urban villages, namely the household registration system and the urban-rural dual system.

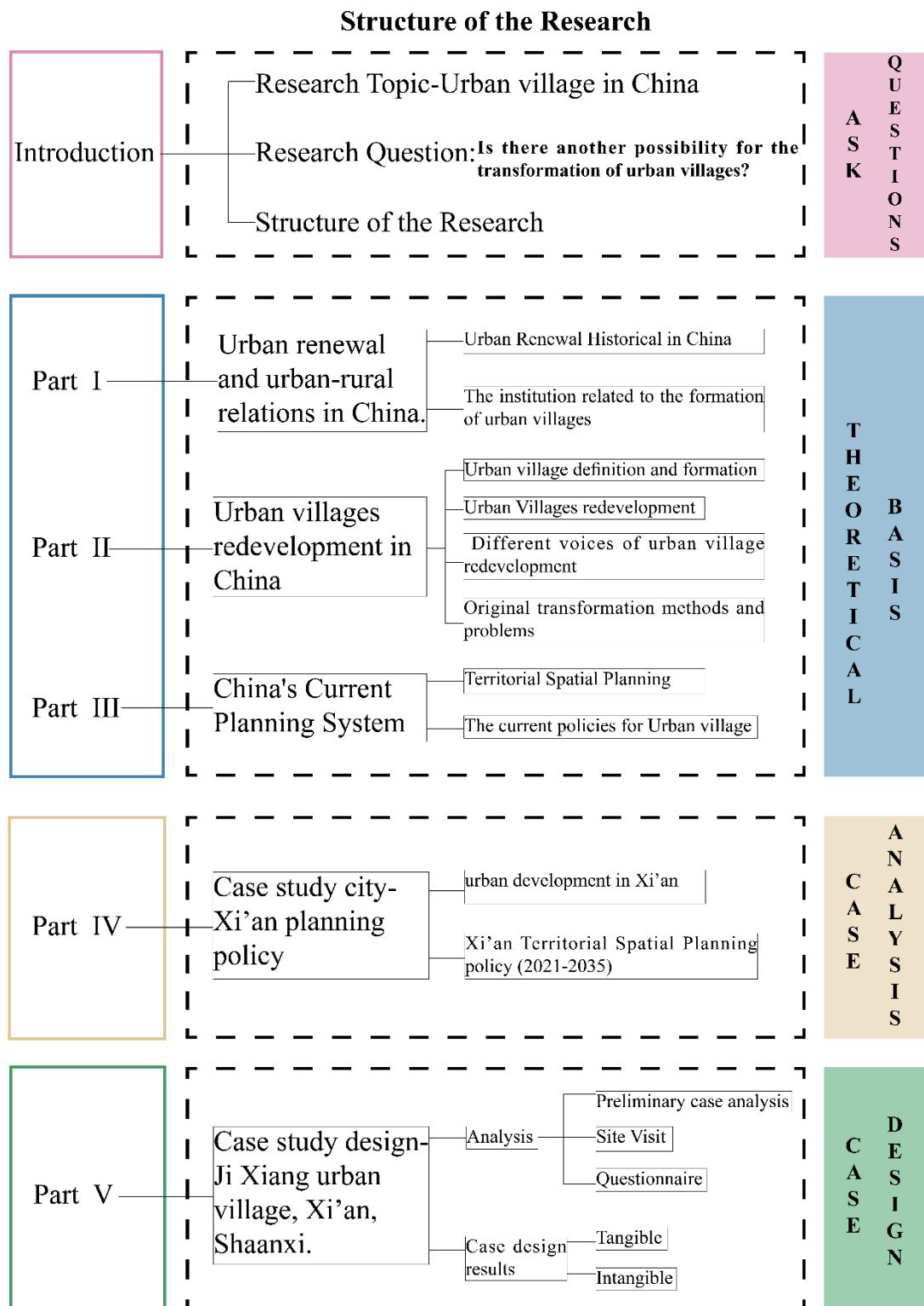
The second part consists of four chapters that focus more on the problems of urban villages themselves, including the definition of urban villages and the differences between urban villages and traditional villages; why urban villages need to be renovated, who contributed to the renovation of urban villages and who are the beneficiaries of the renovation of urban villages; urban villages from different angles, the positive and negative aspects; traditional methods of urban village renovation and the problems after urban village renovation.

The third part has two chapters, which talk about China's current planning policies, national land space planning, and the guidance of national land space planning for urban villages.

The fourth part is the background of the case study, which has two chapters in total. Xi'an is selected as the research city. It tells the development history of urban villages in Xi'an and the guidance of the current municipal land and space planning for urban villages in Xi'an.

The fifth part is the design part of the case study, which selects Jixiang Village in Xi'an as the design village. Through the planning of Xi'an by the higher-level municipal land and space planning, the urban village is transformed. The transformation is carried out in two aspects: tangible and intangible.

Figure 1. Structure of the Research.



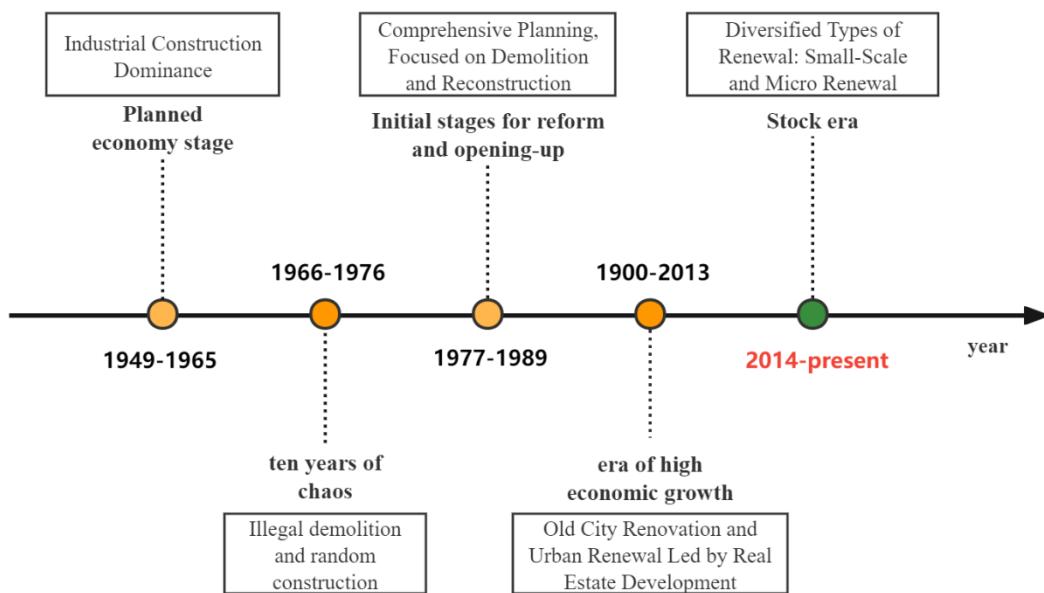
## Part I. Urban Renewal and Urban-Rural Relations in China

### Chapter 1 Urban Renewal Historical in China

Urban villages do not appear suddenly; they are linked with urban development and China's national policy. Urban renewal provides a good perspective for a deeper understanding of when urban villages emerged and when their redevelopment became popular. China's urban renewal can be divided into five stages. Each period has its own distinct policy and target for urban development.

#### 1.1 Five stages-form 1949 to present.

*Figure 2 The evolution process of urban renewal and development in China*



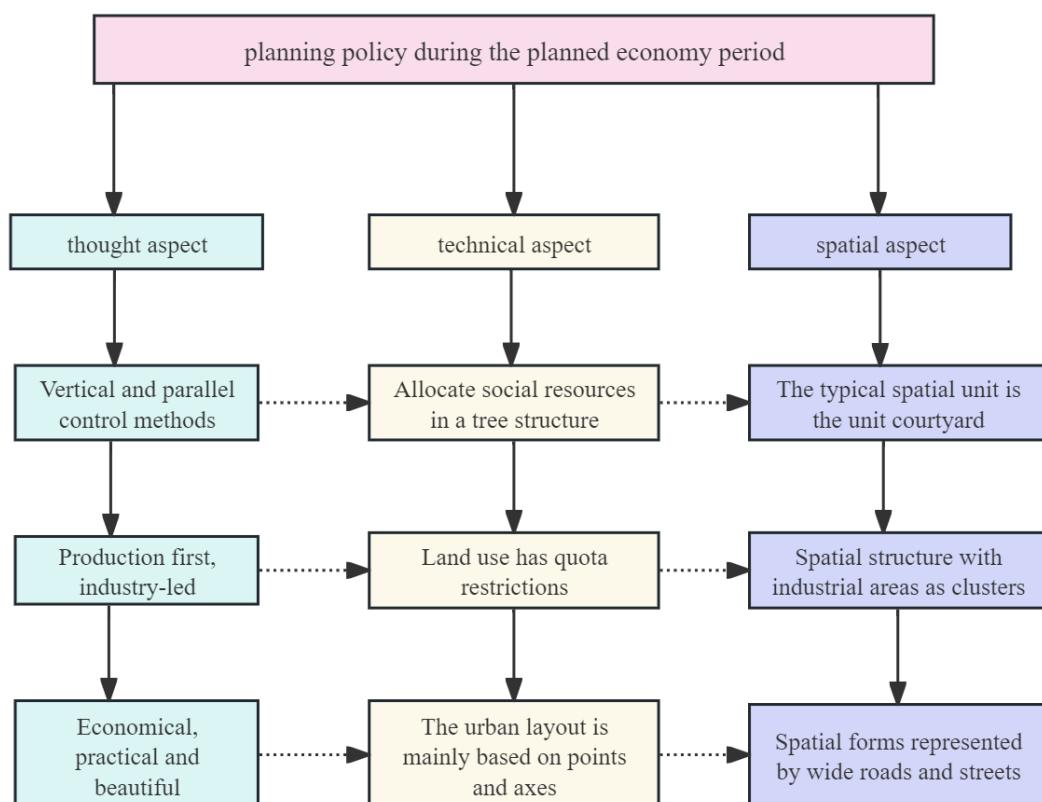
Redesign by author. Source: Tian, L., & Yao, Z. H., & Liang, Y. L. (2021).

- **Planned economy period (1949-1965): Urban physical environment planning and construction led by industrial construction.**

Land is considered a resource, but without adequate planning, its availability becomes limited. In such cases, land development tends to focus on market demands, resulting in a prevalence of commercial developments. Although this approach yields higher benefits, it does not align with the established planning policies of the period.

During the planned economy period, land policy can be divided into three categories: planning thought, technical aspects, and spatial planning. The following sections provide an overview of each category's primary content.

*Figure 3. Planning during the planned economy period.*



Redesign by author. Source: Zhang, Y., & He, Y. (2022).

*Thought aspects.*

The top-down management of the central government is vertical management, and the management of local governments is parallel management. Urban management during the planned economy period was characterized by a closed system. There was little communication between different units (Zhang & Liu, 2021).

Cities during the planned economy period were production-oriented, not consumption-oriented. As the main battlefield of socialist mass production, all planning and construction activities were carried out around industrial production. Therefore, industry-led and production-first were the core ideas of most urban planning and construction, and related planning policies also reflected the important position of industrial production during the planned economy period (Zhang & Liu, 2021).

*Technical aspect.*

Social resources cannot flow normally, and the optimal allocation of resources cannot be achieved. The most core quota indicator is the per capita living area, which is a key indicator that determines the urban housing area and affects the scale of the city.

Under the planning ideas of economical, practical, solid and beautiful, most socialist countries in the planned economy period planned spaces such as "big roads", "big squares" and "big axes", shaping the point-axis spatial form. Streets and squares not only carry urban transportation and citizens' lives, but are also important places for socialist countries to show their superiority, hold rallies and parades, and are therefore important social living spaces.

*Spatial aspect.*

The most typical features of the unit compound are the enclosure of courtyards and functional zoning. The enclosed spatial form centrally manages social production and social

relations, and has the spatial characteristics of closure, complexity, and independence. Most of them are arranged in a matrix, with a simple layout and clear order.

During the planned economy period, the main planning and construction revolved around industrial areas. The industrial layout dominated the spatial layout of the city and laid the spatial framework. A large number of cities formed a spatial structure with "factory + residence" as a group to solve the spatial differentiation problem between work and residence.

The overall performance of the urban road network during the planned economy period was wide roads, large blocks, and sparse road networks.

From 1949-1965, the target of urban development was urban industrial, Controlling the urban environment and improving the living conditions have become the most urgent tasks of urban construction, and at the same time to meet the needs of industrial production. But it is paused because of the policy conflict. (Tian & Yao & Liang, 2021)

- ***Ten years during the "Cultural Revolution" (1966-1976): tortuous and chaotic urban renewal.***

In 1966-1965, during the "Cultural Revolution", the entire city construction was in a state of un-management, and everywhere was a situation of disorderly demolition, construction, crowding, and occupation. Many gardens, monumental buildings, and historical heritage in the old city area of the city have been destroyed in an unprecedented way. (Tian & Yao & Liang, 2021)

- ***The early period of reform and opening up (1977-1989): the restoration of urban planning and the reform of the urban transformation system.***

After the reform and opening up in 1978, the government gradually realized the importance of urban construction and strengthened the understanding of the importance of overall urban planning, short-term planning, and detailed planning in urban construction. In this period, urban renewal mainly adopted the policy of "comprehensive planning, demolition and reconstruction", and the urban renewal of the old city began to be gradually implemented by the overall plan. (Tian & Yao & Liang, 2021)

- ***The period of rapid economic growth (1990-2013): urban transformation and renewal led by real estate developers.***

From 1990 to 2013, the establishment of the paid land use system and the reform of housing commercialization greatly released the value of land, and local governments, developers and the financial capital behind them jointly formed a "growth alliance" to raise reconstruction funds through land auction, increase local fiscal taxes, and improve the urban appearance and urban environment. (Tian & Yao & Liang, 2021) During this period the problem with the urban villages already existed, and the demolition of urban villages was very rude.

- ***New normal period 2014-present: urban renewal under the background of stock.***

China's economic and social development has entered a new stage of development. Urban development has also entered the stock era, gradually shifting from extensive incremental expansion to stock renewal with enhanced connotation. Urban renewal has become an important part of urban development, and the goals, contents and mode

mechanisms of urban renewal have undergone significant changes. The urban villages' reconstruction policy also changed.

### **Summary of chapter 1.**

This chapter takes a macro-level approach to the relationship between urban renewal and urban villages. Cities at different times have different planning policies and development goals. So when did urban villages emerge, why did they appear, and when did the systems closely related to urban villages—the household registration system and the dual land system—come into play? This chapter provides a basic understanding of these issues.

During the planned economy period (1949-1965), the system most closely related to urban villages was established: a dual land structure, with urban land owned by the state and rural land owned by rural collectives. This is one of the reasons why urban villages were difficult to renovate later. Another system was the household registration system, which hindered farmers from entering cities during this period, resulting in a significant separation between urban and rural areas. Urban villages did not yet appear at this time, but the institutional framework had already emerged.

During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), urban development essentially stagnated, and urban construction was almost completely halted. Without large-scale urban expansion, the situation of cities surrounding rural areas did not occur.

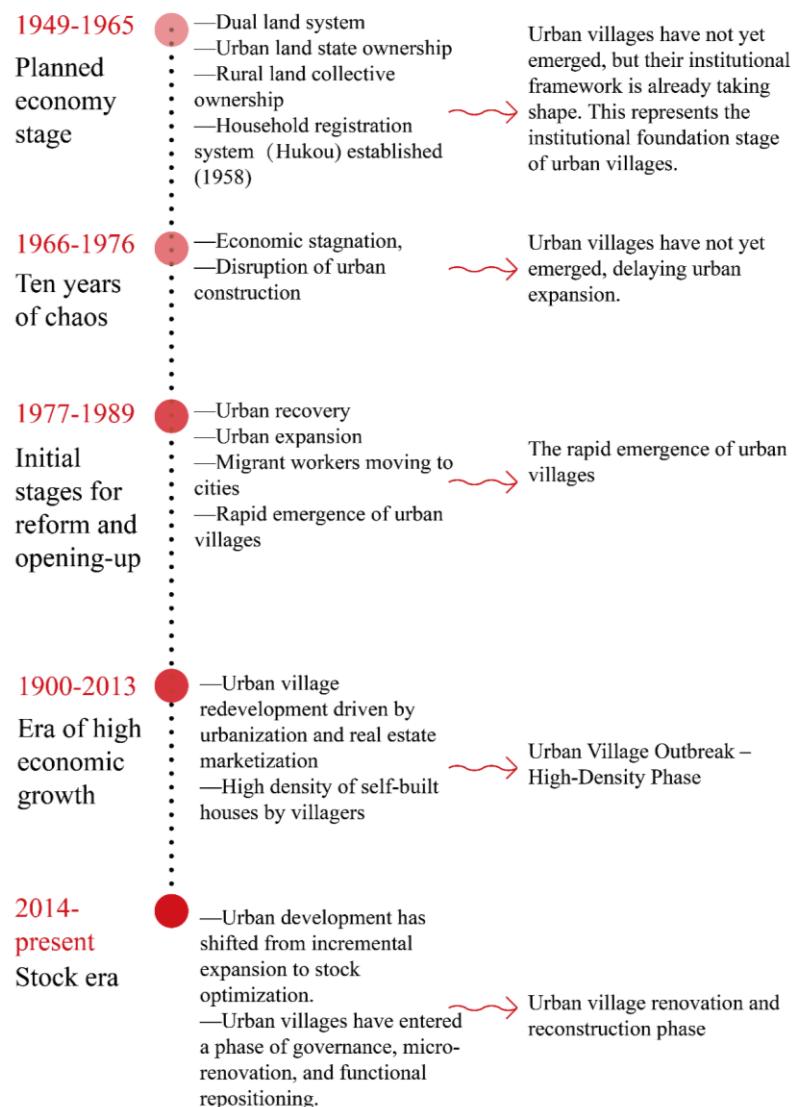
During the reform and opening-up period (1977-1989), cities revived and began to expand, but lacked rational planning. The prototype of urban villages emerged.

During the period of rapid economic development (1990-2013), urban expansion was extremely rapid, and a large number of urban villages began to appear. The influx of migrants into cities and the demand for housing led farmers to extend their houses, and urban villages became settlements for the lower-income urban population. Local governments rely heavily

on land revenue, but demolition costs for urban villages are exorbitant, and many urban villages have existed for a long time.

In the era of stock improvement (2013-present), urban construction has shifted from incremental expansion to stock optimization, with urban renewal becoming the main theme. The approach to urban villages has changed from complete demolition to comprehensive governance and micro-renovation. Urban villages have entered a governance era, moving beyond simple demolition to a more diversified consideration of their existence.

*Figure 4. Summary of the relationship between urban villages and urban renewal.*



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## Chapter 2 The Institution Related to the Formation of Urban Villages

The previous chapter discussed the macro-level impact of urban renewal on the urban villages. This chapter discusses the impact of these institutions on urban villages. Two systems are directly related to the emergence of urban villages and the difficulty of their transformation: China's household registration system and the urban-rural dual policy. The difficulties in urban village redevelopment are closely related to these two systems. To further study the topic of urban villages, this chapter begins with these two systems.

### 2.1 Hukou (household registration).

Why is the Hukou system referred to here? Hukou connects various factors, including work, education, and retirement benefits. Furthermore, traditional inhabitants of the urban village obtained a Hukou different from that of the urban population.

#### •*The formation of the household registration system.*

In January 1958, China promulgated the 'Regulations on Household Registration', which is currently known as the hukou system (li, Chen, Yan, Yu & Zhu, 2007, p03).

The household registration (hukou) system is a unique institution in contemporary China that has been in place since 1958 (Ma, X., Li, Y., & Iwasaki, I. (2024). Every Chinese citizen a Hukou, which determined their rural or urban status and their affiliation with a specific locality (Lin, P., Pan, Y., Wang, Y., & Hu, L. (2024). China operates an urban-rural dual land system related to the hukou system. hukou system, which categorises citizens into urban (non-agricultural) and rural (agricultural) residents of a particular location, is a unique household registration management system (li, Chen, Yan, Yu & Zhu, 2007, p 01). The

village residents receive the rural Hukou. With urbanization, some rural regions become urban, while people's hukou remain rural.

Hukou has many policies, and every city has the Urban Hukou and Rural Hukou, sometimes this cities people who want to buy an apartment in other cities are not permitted, and also sometimes their children do not have the qualifications to study in a city like Beijing.

*Figure 5. The basic differences between urban and rural household registration.*

Household registration	<b>Rural household</b>	<b>Urban household</b>
relationship	<b>registration</b>	<b>registration</b>
Corresponding identity	farmer	city dweller
Rights and interests enjoyed	Land contract management rights and income rights, homestead use rights, and partial social security.	Enjoy public welfare, social services and security provided by the national government.

Source: (Fang, 2025).

•***The difference between urban Hukou and rural Hukou.***

The core of HuKou is difficult to change. It has a resident status system with mandatory classification. Different Hukou obey different institutions. For instance, many years ago, the people who had rural hukou could have two children, but the urban hukou could only have one child. Also, the work types and pension insurance are different.

Figure 6. The different between Urban Hukou and Rural Hukou.

	Urban Hukou	Rural Hukou
Distribution area	Urban	Rural
Source of residential housing	commercial housing sales market.	Allocating homestead land for house building
Work	Urban Residents' Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainly in white-collar, blue-collar jobs.</li> <li>Sound labor security system.</li> </ul>	"Rural Migration and Job Satisfaction" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farmers</li> <li>Migrants often take temporary, low-income jobs.</li> <li>Lacks career stability.</li> </ul>
social welfare	High amounts of medical insurance and pensions	Low amounts of medical insurance and pensions

Design by author.

The urban-rural dual system involves almost all social, economic, political and cultural fields, including the household registration system, housing system, food supply system, non-staple food and fuel supply system, production means supply system, education system, employment system, medical system, there are 14 systems including pension insurance system, labor protection system, talent system, military service system, marriage system, and childbirth system. (Xin, 2013)

## 2.2Dual urban and rural system.

In 1958, China implemented strict controls on population movement and promulgated the household registration management laws and regulations, namely the "Regulations on

Household Registration of the People's Republic of China." This household registration system strictly separated urban and rural residents (Ding,2022).

*Figure 7. Chinese Resident Household Registration Book.*



The urban-rural dual system covers many fields such as economy and society (Li.2014). A system which legally, economically, and socially accords different treatments to the rural and urban populations (Chan & Wei 2021). The most important difference is the identity of the land properties. Urban land is state-owned, but rural land belongs to the rural collective.

Every piece of land has a property, for instance, construction land, agricultural land, Industrial land, etc. When Rural land wants to be used for other purposes, it first needs to be changed into state-owned land. The government will acquire the land.

*Figure 8. land ownership structure-1982 Constitution*

state owned	collectively owned
urban land/ mineral deposits/water flows/ sea areas/ forests/ mountains/ grasslands/ wastelands/ tidal flats	Rural/suburban land/homesteads/ private plots/ private hills/ect

Source: Li, W. (2014).

The 1982 Constitution stipulates that urban land, as well as natural resources such as mineral deposits, water flows, sea areas, forests, mountains, grasslands, wastelands, and tidal flats, belong to state ownership. Rural and suburban land, homesteads, private plots, private hills, and land, forests, mountains, grasslands, wastelands, and tidal flats designated by law as collectively owned, belong to collective ownership unless otherwise specified by law as state-owned. This established China's dual land ownership structure, where urban land is state-owned, and rural land is collectively owned. (li, 2014)

### **2.3Dual urban and rural system time line.**

#### **•1949- *A discussion on rural-urban segregation.***

Mao Zedong thought at that time that China should change from an agricultural country into an industrial country. The government should shift its focus from rural areas to urban areas. In this regard, a set of "urban-biased" planned economic systems should be established in terms of supporting policies, including dual urban and rural household registration management, strict rural-urban population mobility, planned unified purchase and marketing of agricultural products, rural people's communes, urban employment, and consumption rationing, etc. The basic characteristics of the dual structure during this period were the separation of urban and rural areas, the priority of heavy industry, and the focus on protecting cities (Liu & Ding. P.76).

#### **•1978- *Dual-track reform and dual development structure.***

Deng Xiaoping, the chief architect of China's reform and opening up, proposed the idea of starting from the countryside and then advancing to the cities. (Liu&Ding. P.76).

**•2002- *On the coordinated development of urban and rural areas.***

China's exploration of urban-rural relations has entered a new stage of "industry promoting agriculture and cities leading the countryside". Hu Jintao expounded on the "two trends" of agriculture feeding industry and rural areas supporting cities in the early stage of industrialization and industry feeding agriculture and cities supporting rural areas in the middle and late stages of industrialization, which theoretically explained the universal laws of the interaction between industrial and agricultural development and the coordination of urban and rural development.

**•2017- *Integrated development of urban and rural areas.***

In 2017, Xi Jinping the rural revitalization strategy was clearly put forward, and it was further pointed out that agriculture and industry, rural areas and cities should be planned as an integrated system. Building a new type of worker-agricultural relationship and urban-rural relationship is the focus of high-quality development of urban-rural integration in the new era.

**2.4 The urban-rural dual structure from different perspectives.**

The 2008 global economic crisis brought a huge impact on the Chinese economy. More than 50 million jobs disappeared and 20 million migrant workers lost their jobs. The huge number of unemployed people would cause great social unrest in any country. However, China did not experience a large-scale social crisis. More than 20 million unemployed people quietly returned to China's vast rural areas like a tide. Qiu Baoxing, former vice minister of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, once said that it was China's unique urban-rural dual structure that helped to resist the economic crisis. The flow of labor between urban and rural areas is two-way. Migrant workers can use the small peasant economy to

avoid the crisis. This is also the fundamental reason why the Chinese economy has a very strong resilience that is difficult for outsiders to imagine. (Lu, C. 2020)

It is precisely because farmers have such a retreat in the countryside that when peasant families believe that there are more opportunities in the city, they will choose to go to the city to earn income. However, when they find it difficult to settle down decently in the city, they will return to the countryside. (He, X. 2019)

### **Summary of chapter 2.**

This chapter discusses systems that are closely related to urban villages. The urban-rural dual system acts like an invisible wall, dividing Chinese society into two worlds: "urban" and "rural." The household registration system (hukou) is the "access card" to this wall, determining which world people belong to and which resources they can access. Urban villages, however, represent the beginning of this wall's loosening, with special areas resulting from rapid urban expansion.

The urban-rural dual system, which began during the planned economy era, manages rural and urban areas separately in terms of politics, economy, and society (such as education, healthcare, and social security). Its core purpose is to provide limited support for urban industrialization. The household registration system (hukou) is the specific tool for implementing this system, dividing citizens into "agricultural households" and "non-agricultural households."

Although urban villages are geographically located within urban areas, they retain rural characteristics in terms of land ownership, social governance, and lifestyles.

After the reform and opening up, a large number of surplus rural laborers migrated to cities for work, but their household registration was "agricultural," which excluded them from urban public services. Despite being the city's builders "builders" and "economic

contributors" they were marginalized. Cheap rental housing in urban villages became a refuge for migrant workers in the city.

The household registration and urban-rural dual systems are the historical roots and structural causes of urban village emergence.

*Figure 9. Summary of the impact of the urban-rural dual system and the household registration system on urban villages*

Dimensions	Urban-rural Dual System	Household Registration System	Urban Village
<b>Core essence</b>	A macro-level system that divides and governs urban and rural areas separately in terms of politics, economy, and society.	Household registration is the core tool for implementing the dual system, serving as a system for the allocation of identity and resources.	Urban villages are a unique spatial product of the dual system during rapid urbanization.
<b>Main features</b>	- Urban-rural separation system - Resources tilted towards cities	- Citizens are divided into "agricultural household registration" and "non-agricultural household registration" - Household registration status is linked to welfare benefits (education, medical care, housing, etc.)	- Villages within the city - Land is collectively owned - High-density, chaotic architecture - Coexistence of local villagers and migrant workers
<b>Function/role</b>	During the planned economy period, capital was accumulated for industrialization and social stability was maintained.	Consolidate the urban-rural population distribution, control population flow, and ensure the stable operation of the dual structure.	- Provide a place for low-income people to settle in cities - Provide sustainable livelihoods for farmers who have lost their land
<b>The interaction among the three</b>	The root cause – the dual urban-rural system – has created a huge gap	Catalysts and Barriers - Creating a Migrant Population: Push (rural poverty) and pull (urban opportunities) work	Spontaneous Responses and Outcomes - Demand Generation: The demand of the migrant

	between urban and rural areas.	together to drive rural populations to cities. - Establishing Entry Barriers: The household registration system (hukou) excludes migrant workers from urban services, preventing them from truly integrating into the city.	population for low-cost living spaces - Supply Generation: Urban expansion requisitions of farmland but bypassing homesteads, resulting in displaced farmers building houses on collective land for rent, forming an informal housing market for the migrant population.
<b>Three closed loop</b>	dual system → household registration barrier → migrant population cannot settle down + displaced farmers need to make a living → giving rise to rental economy in urban villages → forming urban villages.		
<b>Evolution and current situation</b>	It is being weakened, but its impact is far-reaching, affecting issues such as land systems and social welfare disparities.	The restrictions are being gradually eased, with lower thresholds for settling in small and medium-sized cities. However, the added value of household registration in large cities remains high, and the reform is still ongoing.	Facing large-scale renovation and demolition, the disappearance of urban villages has improved the city's appearance on the one hand, but it has also driven up the cost of living in the city and eliminated a place for low-income groups to live.

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## Part II. Urban Villages Redevelopment in China

### Chapter 3. Urban Village Definition and Formation

#### 3.1 Urban village definition and formation stage.

The macro-level perspective has already been touched upon in the previous two chapters, approaching the issue from the perspective of urban renewal to understand the relationship between urban policies and urban villages, as well as the systems closely linked to urban villages, such as the household registration system and the urban-rural dual system. This chapter begins a more focused analysis of urban villages themselves, starting with the definition of urban villages and the differences between urban villages, cities, and traditional villages.

*Figure 10. Image display of urban villages*



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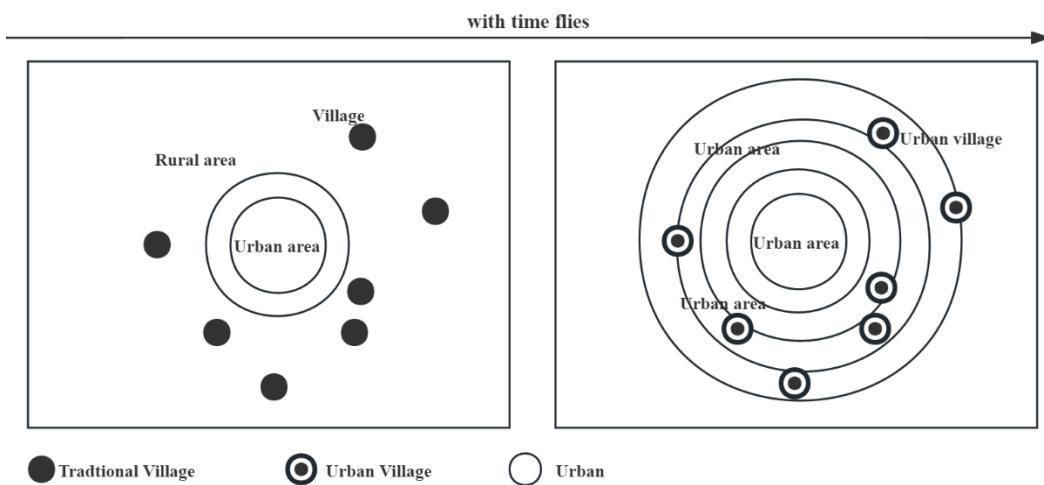


<https://www.yicai.com/news/101876814.html>

The difference between urban villages and cities is clearly visible in the pictures. The buildings in urban villages are smaller in size than those in cities, but their density is higher.

The urban village (or village-in-the-city, *chengzhongcun*), which describes rural villages that have been absorbed by urban spatial or administrative growth (Dror, 2015, p. 927). Since the opening and reform policy in the late 1970s, an increasing number of Chinese cities have been rapidly expanding along with their rapid economic growth, and large populations are migrating to urban areas (Zhao, An, Chen & Tao, 2021, p. 01). During this urban expansion, the government has bypassed rural residential areas to reduce land acquisition compensation and conflicts with villagers and used agricultural lands with a relatively low development cost, which has formed an urban–rural mixed spatial structure and landscape, namely, today's urban villages in China (Zhao, An, Chen & Tao, 2021, p. 01).

*Figure 11. The spatial evolution of urban village formation.*



Redesign by author. source: Zhou, X. H. (2007).

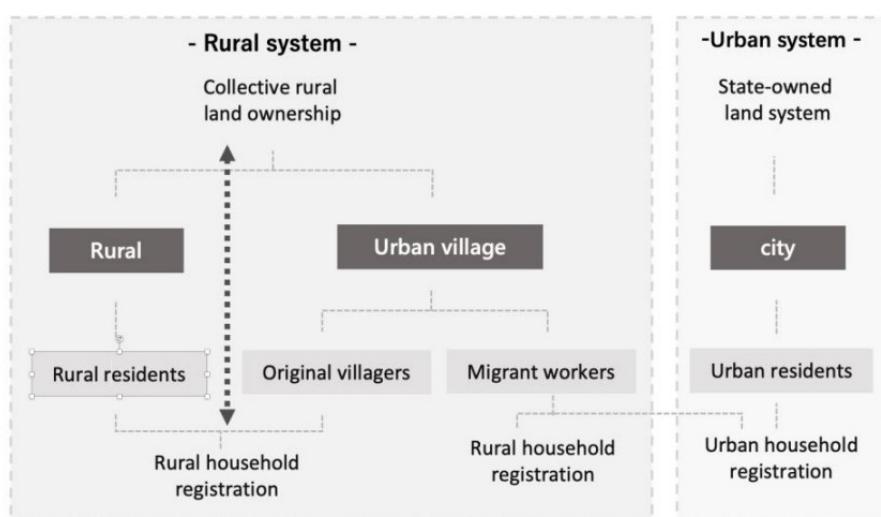
Initially, rural areas were located around cities at a certain distance. However, as cities expanded, even if the villages remained in their original locations, they had become part of the city.

### 3.2 The difference between urban villages and villages and cities.

The differences between urban villages, cities, and traditional villages are not only visually apparent but also fundamentally different. Traditional villages represent rural society and embody past ways of life; cities, on the other hand, are standard products of modernity; while urban villages are a product of China's rapid development, resembling neither cities nor traditional villages. Although located in urban areas, urban villages adhere to rural management practices.

There are obvious differences between the management systems of urban villages in household registration, administration, planning, municipal facilities, education, sanitation, family planning, and the corresponding urban systems. In terms of architectural landscapes, the villages are incompatible with urban built-up areas. Surrounded by urban buildings, the population density is large, and the complex structure is no longer a village in the traditional sense, forming a "city is not like a city, village is not like a village." The phenomenon of urban villages. (Zhou, 2007, p. 08)

*Figure 12. Classification and structure of Rural-urban Dual Society in China.*



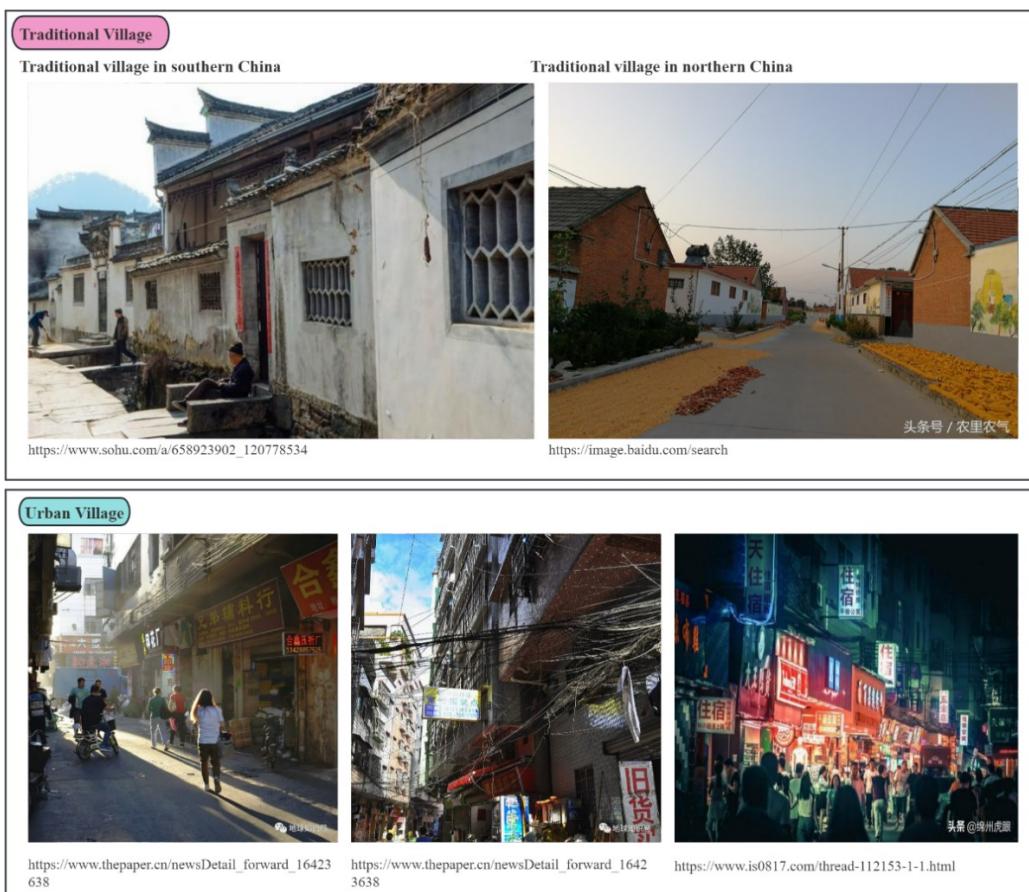
Source: Xu, X., & Akita, N. (2021).

- ***Urban villages and traditional villages.***

Urban and traditional villages have the same points; the land belongs to the village collective. However, urban and traditional villages differ significantly. The farmer rent is different, the traditional villages rely on the agricultural income, but the urban villages land lord income are different, some part from the rent, and some part from the job.

The lifestyle of traditional villages revolves around farmland; land is the core, and all relationships unfold around it. Villagers know each other well and live in a relatively closed society. The lifestyle of traditional villages is more stable, isolated, and self-sufficient.

*Figure 13. Traditional village and Urban village*



Design by author.

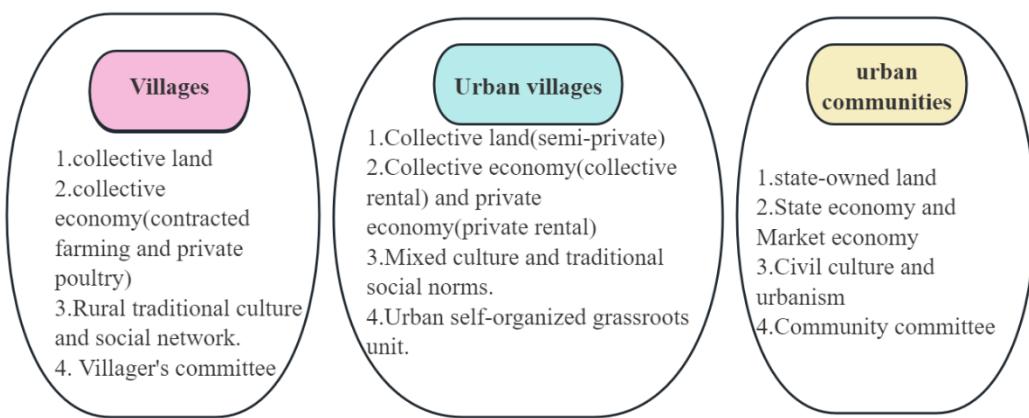
Traditional villages and urban villages also differ greatly in form. Traditional villages are mostly one or two stories high, while urban villages are mostly three to seven stories high, and some are even higher. Urban villages are further away from nature, with almost no greenery, while traditional villages are close to nature.

The lifestyle in traditional villages is generally one of rising with the sun and resting at sunset. Urban villages, on the other hand, have a thriving nighttime economy, with many vendors setting up stalls in the evenings, attracting large crowds to their night markets.

- ***Urban villages and urban communities.***

Subsequent to the land reforms in China in 1953, the central government stipulated two types of land ownership: collective and state ownership. All urban land is owned by the state, whereas rural land is owned by rural collective committees. (Yang & Cai, 2020). Urban villages also differ from urban communities, although the urban village is surrounded by cities.

Figure 14. *The difference between Villages, Urban villages and Urban communities.*



Redesign by author. Source: (Liu, He, Wu & Webster, 2010, p. 137)

There are obvious differences between standard urban communities and urban villages, which can be clearly seen from their appearance. Urban communities are planned by real estate developers, and their landscaping, roads, and buildings meet various standards. In contrast, most buildings in urban villages are self-built by villagers, lacking reasonable planning, and many suffer from poor lighting, requiring artificial lighting even during the day.

### **Summary of chapter 3.**

This chapter discusses the differences between traditional villages, urban villages, and urban communities. Distinguishing between these three is crucial because urban villages, as a transitional form, were once traditional villages but are now located in the city, yet they are not entirely the same as urban communities.

The three differ significantly in their form. Traditional villages are more pastoral, more isolated, and have a slower pace of life; urban communities are products of modernization, with dedicated property management, comprehensive service facilities, and good green spaces; while urban villages have departed from the lifestyle of traditional villages, no longer relying on farming, and have not fully integrated into the city, with almost no greenery.

Their social structures also differ. Urban communities are largely comprised of strangers; residents close their doors, know nothing about their neighbors, and have relatively weak interpersonal relationships. Traditional villages are completely different, with every household knowing each other well; urban villages differ from both, consisting of a portion of original villagers who know each other well, and another portion of completely unfamiliar newcomers. The population composition of urban villages seems to be even more complex than that of urban communities.

Urban villages and traditional villages are both governed by villager self-governance, with land belonging to the village collective; urban land, on the other hand, belongs to the state.

Analyzing the differences between these three types of villages can provide a better understanding of the difficulties in urban village redevelopment and why urban villages struggle to integrate into urban life.

*Figure 15. A summary of the differences between traditional villages, urban villages, and urban communities.*

Feature Dimension	Traditional Villages	Urban Villages	Standard Urban Community
<b>Morphology</b>	Pastoral scenery, low density, dispersed, and integrated with nature	"Handshake buildings," high density, overcrowding, and outdated infrastructure.	Well-planned layout, wide roads, standardized greening, and complete infrastructure.
<b>Economic Foundation</b>	Primary industry (agriculture, forestry, and fisheries)	Rental economy + collective economic dividends	Secondary and tertiary industries (industry, commerce, and services)
<b>Social Structure</b>	A close-knit community with strong neighborly relations	A semi-familiar society where local villagers (acquaintances) and outside tenants (strangers) coexist.	Strangers Society
<b>Land nature</b>	Collective construction land (including residential land and cultivated land)	Collective construction land (residential land)	State-owned construction land
<b>Population composition</b>	Stable local agricultural population	Original villagers + a large number of low-income migrant workers	Citizens with urban household registration
<b>Governance Model</b>	Villager self-governance (village committee)	Village self-governance	Property Management Company
<b>Cultural characteristics</b>	Traditional local culture and folk	The blending and collision of urban	Modern and diverse urban culture

	customs are well preserved.	and rural cultures, the coexistence of traditional customs and urban culture	
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## Chapter 4. Urban Villages Redevelopment

Initially, the local government avoided purchasing land in urban villages, choosing instead to buy agricultural land to build residential and other functional areas. However, why are they now considering the redevelopment of urban villages? This chapter analyses the reasons for urban redevelopment and identifies the stakeholders involved in the redevelopment of urban villages. The problem of urban village redevelopment is that urban renewal, as a way to reuse existing land, is inevitable as urban socio-economic development reaches a certain stage. Its core is to integrate the complex ownership structure of the current situation before redevelopment (Deng & Mao, 2021). This involves the interests of multiple parties, including local governments, villagers and village collectives, the main groups of developers, and non-direct beneficiaries of the migrant population.

### 4.1 why redevelop urban village.

Since the implementation of the reform and opening policy in 1978, with the rapid economic development, urbanization, and industrialization, China's arable land has dropped sharply, the contradiction between more people and less land has gradually become apparent, and the awareness of arable land protection has begun to sprout, and China has introduced some arable land protection policies and regulations (Zhou, Li & Liu, 2021, P 04).

At least three factors have contributed to the redevelopment of urban villages. First, the ongoing urbanization process has fueled an urgent need to improve urban living conditions, prompting the transformation of poorly-designed urban villages into high-quality urban spaces. Second, from a production perspective, market-oriented land reforms and developers' pursuit of investment returns through land rent differentials are also significant drivers of urban village demolition and reconstruction. Finally, national and local

governments have played a crucial role in promoting urban village redevelopment and integrating informal urban spaces into formal urban areas (Jiang, Lai, Chen & Tang, 2022).

*Figure 16. The main reasons for urban village renovation.*

Transformation driving force	specific reasons	Influence
<b>Increase fiscal revenue</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Land Transfer Revenue: Converting collectively owned land in urban villages into state-owned construction land and then auctioning it off generates substantial land transfer fees.</li> <li>2. Continuous Tax Revenue: Newly built commercial complexes, office buildings, and high-end residences after the redevelopment will generate continuous property taxes, corporate value-added tax, and personal income tax.</li> <li>3. Reduced Fiscal Burden: Reduced ongoing investment in aging infrastructure and emergency management (such as fire protection and sanitation).</li> </ol>	<p>This is the most direct economic driver, representing a combination of "increasing revenue" and "reducing expenditure." The redevelopment provides local governments with a crucial source of revenue and is an important component of the "land finance" model.</p>
<b>Enhance the city's image</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beautify the city's appearance: Eliminate the "dirty, messy, and poor" image of the city and build a modern urban landscape.</li> <li>2. Optimize the investment environment: A clean and modern city image can attract more high-end talent and capital.</li> <li>3. Policy assessment and performance evaluation: Urban renewal and image improvement are important and visible indicators for measuring the governance capabilities of local governments.</li> </ol>	<p>This is a project that addresses both the "face" and the "substance." It enhances the city's soft power and competitiveness by improving its image, while also serving the performance evaluation of officials.</p>
<b>Addressing the pressure of land use limits/quotas</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Farmland Protection Red Line: The farmland red line strictly limits outward urban expansion (occupying farmland).</li> <li>2. Intensive and Economical Land Use: Given the inability to expand through new land use, the only option is to tap into existing land resources. Urban villages, with their extremely low land use efficiency, are a primary target for revitalization.</li> <li>3. Obtaining Construction Land Quotas: By renovating urban villages, a large amount of valuable and well-located new construction land</li> </ol>	<p>This is a hard constraint from the top, forcing local governments to tap into their internal potential. Urban village redevelopment has become the primary way to solve the land shortage problem within the policy framework.</p>

	quotas can be obtained within the city without violating the farmland red line.	
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- ***The main source of finance for local governments, the sale of land.***

Some large cities in China are at the bottleneck of urban development because land resources for further development have become finite. Therefore, urban renewal has become a crucial component of urban development. (Jiang &Lai &Chen& Tang, (2022)).

Public infrastructure and planning policies during dynamic urbanization have substantially impacted the land rent gap. When the surrounding urban environment and infrastructure are improved, the potential rent of the urban village area continues to rise rapidly. In contrast, due to suboptimal land use and a disorganized physical environment, the existing land rent in urban villages has been low for a long time. The formation of a land rent gap makes it profitable for developers to redevelop urban villages for the “highest and best” use. (Jiang &Lai &Chen& Tang, 2022).

- ***Limitations of understanding-city image.***

From the start, most people believed that the urban village would ruin the city's image, much like cancer. Therefore, the government is interested in reconstructing the urban village, and city dwellers also hope to reconstruct it. Aesthetics lack diversity and are thus singular.

- ***Planning policies, basic farmland red lines, etc. - no excess land.***

Based on the control of various land indicators, urban villages, as blank areas, are relatively easy to carry out urban transform.

For most city governments, the renovation of urban villages not only provides a large amount of reserved land resources for urban development but can also be understood as an important performance indicator for urban environmental quality improvement (Lang et al., 2016). In this context, the transformation of urban villages has become an important measure for many city governments to adhere to the red line of cultivated land, ensure economic development, and improve the quality of cities. Revitalizing the inefficient use of urban village stocks has become a top priority for many city governments (Lin, 2015).

#### **4.2 Who is driving the transformation of urban villages?**

Due to the urbanization, the original villages now surrounded by the cities, and the land value is high than before. Sale the land can got the money to the local government, and at the same time the Real estate developer also can got the benefits. The main participants in the urban village redevelopment include the local governments, real estate developers, and local villagers. (Jiang, Lai, Chen & Tang, 2022, p. 02)

*Figure 17. Urban villages under demolition.*



<https://cn.nytimes.com/china/20151104/c04sino-urbanvillages/>

[https://slide.news.sina.com.cn/slide\\_1\\_2841\\_99297.html#p=1](https://slide.news.sina.com.cn/slide_1_2841_99297.html#p=1)

- ***Local government.***

Local government redevelopment has many reasons. First, at the beginning, the people only knew the negative effects of urban villages; they thought urban villages were the cancer of the city, so the government wanted to improve the image of the city. The second reason is that they can sell the land and use the money in other ways.

As the public manager and operator of the city, the local government can obtain part of the land appreciation by transforming the urban villages, maximizing the benefits of the land assets in the urban villages, improving the image of the city, enhancing the urban taste, accumulating funds and reserving land for urban construction, and achieving public goals on the one hand, and satisfying local interests on the other hand, achieving both achievements and political achievements, and winning the praise of the people. To a certain extent, the local government can be said to be the biggest beneficiary of the land and house expropriation in the urban villages. (nie bo)

- ***village collective.***

As the manager of collective property and the village self-government organization, the village collective plays an important role in land and house expropriation in urban villages. On the one hand, the village collective represents the interests of the government and is the nerve ending of the government's management of the country. Its funds come from payments made by the local government. It exercises some management functions entrusted by the government and assists in land and house expropriation in urban villages. However, the village collective represents the interests of the villagers. In the process of land and house expropriation in urban villages, it negotiates with the local government and developers on behalf of the villagers, strives to increase the compensation standards, transfers and resettles

labor as much as possible, and enables the collective assets to maintain and increase their value.

- ***Real estate developers.***

The development and construction projects of urban villages are mainly divided into two parts: resettlement and commercial housing development. Developers intervene to make a profit. As long as the methods are correct and cost control is reasonable, developers' investments will generally yield rich returns.

Initially, agricultural land is cheaper than residential land; therefore, the real estate developer buys the agricultural land. However, one day, they find that the land prices are very high, and when they redevelop the urban villages, they still benefit. To the real estate developer, although they pay more money than they paid for the land agriculture, at the beginning, they bought the resident area cheaper than now. However, they can still obtain significant benefits.

*Figure 18. Resettlement communities after the demolition of urban villages.*



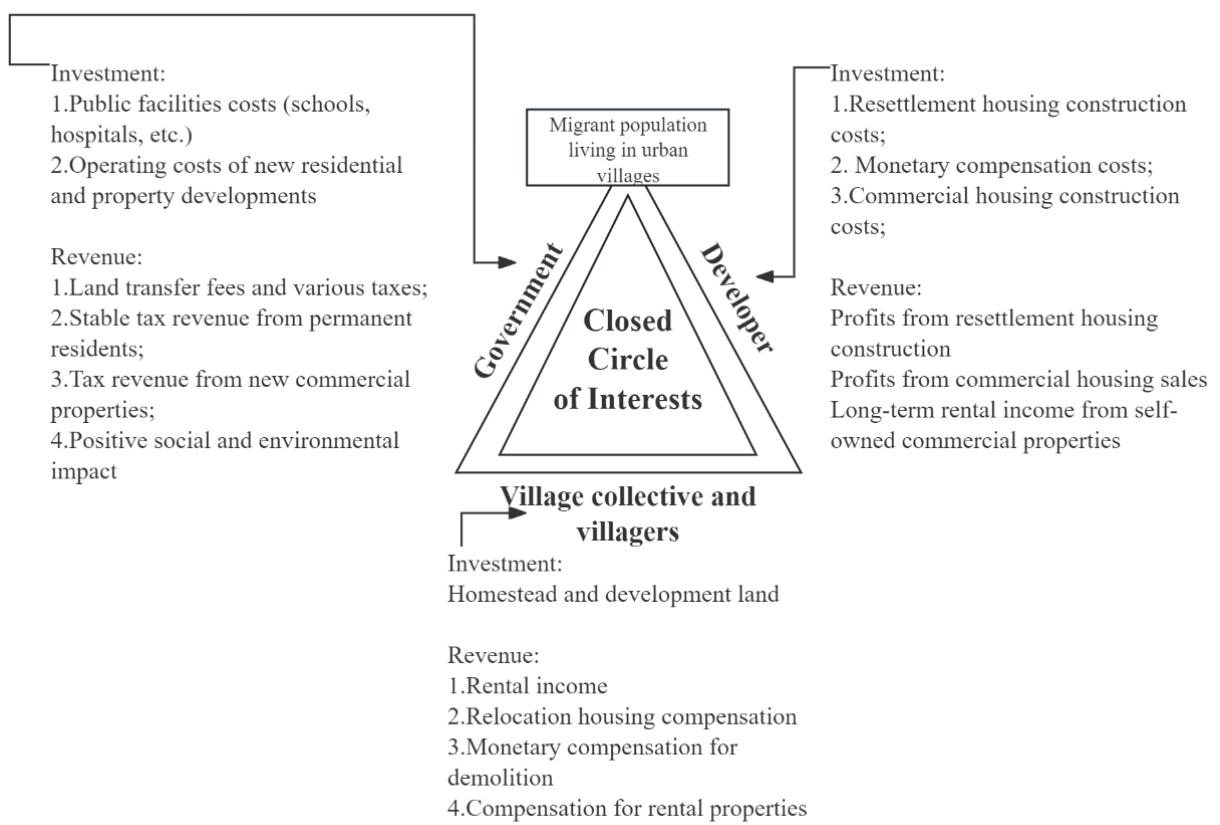
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- **Local villagers.**

When the local villagers receive the message that their village will be demolished, they start to build a house, hoping to get more money. Therefore, they only consider the economic aspects and ignore the living environment, so the living feeling is not good. Dark, damp. Therefore, they also hope to be demolished quickly. The villagers were demolished, and the local villagers became richer than before. Apartment prices are high, and ordinary people may only have one apartment; some people do not even have apartments and only rent. However, the villagers have many apartments.

*Figure 19. The interest circle of urban village renovation*



Source: Tian, Tao & Liang (2020).

## Summary of chapter 4.

This chapter primarily elucidates two main directions: why urban villages need redevelopment, and the stakeholders involved in urban village redevelopment. Urban village redevelopment is extremely complex and protracted; some villages, planned for demolition years or even decades ago, remain standing.

Money is a significant factor. After learning of slated demolition, villagers often begin adding to their buildings. Compensation is complex, based on building area and population. Villagers seeking higher compensation add to their structures, but demolishing a village requires substantial funds, making demolition impossible for some due to economic reasons.

The main reasons for demolishing urban villages are threefold: the city's image (people generally perceive urban villages as dirty and chaotic, damaging the city's image), local government revenue from land acquisition, improved performance records, and a better urban image. Villagers primarily focus on compensation, with the village collective acting as a mediator. Developers also profit from land price differences. This seems like a win-win situation for all parties involved. However, the issue of migrant workers hasn't been considered. The demolition of urban villages forces low-income migrants to seek alternative urban villages.

Furthermore, as time goes on, some villagers are starting to realize that their previous lives were better. The high property management fees and lack of income are also factors to consider.

*Figure 20. Summary of Reasons for Urban Village Redevelopment and Stakeholder Relations.*

Dimension	Core Aspects	Content Interpretation
<b>Factors of change</b>	<b>Urban development needs</b>	Transforming "dirty, messy, and poor" urban villages will enhance the city's image, optimize its

		functional layout, and achieve modern development.
	<b>Land resource dilemma</b>	While strictly adhering to the red line for arable land, we should make intensive use of existing construction land to create space for urban expansion.
	<b>Government fiscal considerations</b>	By selling land and generating future tax revenue, substantial land finance benefits can be obtained, and sustained commercial vitality can be stimulated.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Local government: the leader</b>	Formulate rules, grasp the direction, and pursue multiple goals of policy, economic, and social benefits.
	<b>Village collective: coordinator</b>	Representing the interests of villagers and the collective, it serves as a crucial link between the government, villagers, and developers.
	<b>Villagers: Core Participants</b>	They are most concerned about personal compensation and resettlement plans, and are pursuing livelihood security and future livelihood.
	<b>Developer: Execution and Profit-Making Party</b>	Investing capital and technology to pursue commercial profits while fulfilling social responsibility.

Designed by author.

## Chapter 5 Different Voices of Urban Village Redevelopment

This chapter discusses urban villages from different perspectives, highlighting both their positive and negative aspects. It also explores the changing perceptions of urban villages, from initial aversion and the view that they are a scourge on the city, synonymous with filth and disorder, to the gradual recognition of their functional advantages, such as providing shelter for low-income individuals.

Urban villages are no longer seen as solely negative; their image has become more multifaceted. This chapter will detail the advantages and disadvantages of urban villages.

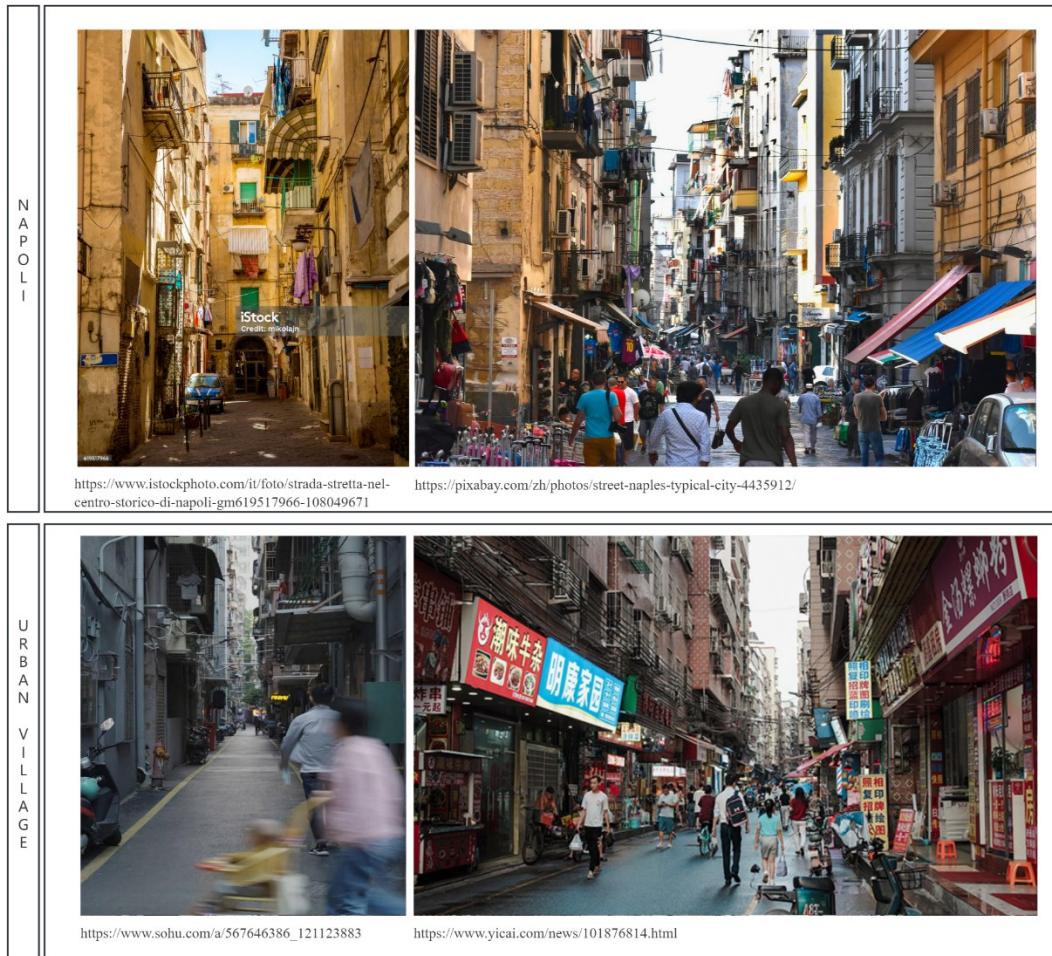
### 5.1 Advantages of urban villages.

- The living fossil of urban development, a trace of history.*

China has a long history, but contemporary architectural styles dominate its landscape, depriving people of the opportunity to observe the progression of cities. Urban development has diminished the city's unique morphology, creating a uniform appearance and removing its historical attributes and distinct identity.

It is difficult to objectively judge a city's beauty. Demolishing all urban villages is not a scientific approach to urbanization. For instance, Venice's topology, with its lower levels and narrow corridors, is somewhat similar to that of urban villages, yet it is renowned for its charm. And also, as a foreigner, I have a different feeling about the city of Napoli. Although it is not as clean and tidy as other Italian cities, it has its own charm. If there is another way to reconstruct urban villages, beauty does not have a single standard, and clean and advanced is not perfect.

Figure 21. Comparison of street scene similarity - urban village vs. Napoli.



Designed by author.

•***The income of famers who lost the agriculture land.***

Urban villages evolved from traditional villages, where local people relied on agriculture as their primary source of income. However, urbanization has changed this, leading to the loss of traditional livelihoods.

As a result, they constructed additional levels, initially aiming to obtain more money from the local government and real estate developers. However, for various reasons, the local government did not promptly demolish their settlements. A large number of migrants flow

into cities, creating a significant demand for housing, especially low-rent housing (Liu, He, Wu & Webster, 2010, p. 137). Consequently, local families began renting out these new levels to immigrants and other area residents.

- ***Urban equity-The living area afford for the lower income people.***

Achieving equitable urban distribution presents challenges, as housing costs vary significantly across different areas. For example, rental prices in the city centre tend to be higher than those in the suburbs. Consequently, individuals working in the city without housing must contemplate renting accommodation. However, securing a rental in the city centre proves challenging for many, leading them to opt for more distant locations, albeit requiring additional commuting time.

Nevertheless, urban villages are distributed quite evenly throughout the city, with rent prices in these areas often lower compared to other types of buildings, even in the city centre. This offers an opportunity for lower-income individuals to reside in the heart of the city. As a result, the distribution of urban villages helps mitigate the segregation within the city.

- ***Reserve space for urban development.***

The city boasts a notably high building density, with towering structures ubiquitous. Urban development necessitates adequate reserve space. Rushing to develop the entire city prematurely may hinder the ability to accommodate future urban needs effectively.

In comparison to the high-density buildings, urban villages are relatively less dense. Therefore, in the future, if the city requires new functions, redeveloping urban villages is more feasible than other areas, regardless of the financial resources or the scale of the redevelopment project.

- ***Undertake the responsibilities of the Government.***

To improve their income, many people move from their hometown to a big city, where they can earn more money. However, the cost of living is also higher in big cities, so to save money, most immigrants live in urban villages.

Urban village not only provides cheap accommodation for low-income migrants to live in cities, but also puts less pressure on the government to develop a costly program to house migrant labourers during the rural to urban transformation. (Liu, He, Wu & Webster, 2010, p. 136) In fact, urban villages share the city government's responsibility to provide migrants with housing, and make it possible for the city to take advantage of cheap and flexible labor without bearing the extra costs associated with labor relocation and without risking social instability. As a result, the process of urbanization occurring in the reform period has been relatively cheap and painless for the government (Zhang, 2004). In this sense, the urban village has positive functions not only in terms of accommodating the large number of rural migrants, but also through absorbing areas of potential social instability. (Liu, He, Wu & Webster, 2010, p. 138)

## **5.2 Disadvantages of urban villages.**

- ***The danger of shadow hiding.***

Urban villages serve multiple functions beyond just providing living spaces; they often include stores, particularly on the ground floor, which sell food and various goods. Additionally, some businesses are located within these areas. This makes urban villages feel like open spaces where everyone can enter freely, unlike gated housing estates that require keys for entry and have security personnel ensuring safety. Consequently, the living

environment in urban villages tends to be less orderly compared to more secure housing estates.

Another reason is the ease of renting rooms in urban villages. Often, there is no contract required, and the rental periods are very flexible. This leads to a high turnover of residents and significant mobility of personnel.

- ***Lack of public space.***

Public space provides public resources for social members to use, and social members conduct normal communication, exchange, exercise and other social activities in public space. Because local villagers in urban villages continue to build houses under the "profit drive", and even build illegally and encroach on farmland, the public space in urban villages has been greatly squeezed, and the overall plot ratio has increased sharply. (Chen, 2024)

Natural landscapes such as trees, lawns, and flower beds are almost extinct. Residents have difficulty accessing greenery, and lack places to get close to nature and relax. There is a lack of shade in the summer, and the heat island effect is significant. Specialized community squares, sports venues (such as basketball courts, badminton courts, and fitness equipment areas), and children's playgrounds are extremely rare. Residents, especially children and teenagers, lack safe and suitable places for physical exercise, games, and social activities. Public libraries, cultural activity rooms, community centers, small parks and other facilities are basically missing. Residents lack formal places for cultural and entertainment activities, learning exchanges, and community gatherings. There are very few public seats, pavilions, and other facilities for people to stay for a short time, chat, and sunbathe. The elderly, parents with children, and other groups are particularly lacking in safe and comfortable outdoor places to stay.

- Inadequate infrastructure.***

Although they are within cities and their land (mainly agricultural land) has been converted into urban land, ownership of the homesteads and collective construction land still belongs to rural collective organizations. As a result, urban villages are not entirely under urban management, which results in a chaotic management structure which in turn increases the cost of this management (Wu, Sun, Choguill, 2020, p. 02).

### **Summary of chapter 5.**

This chapter primarily discusses the advantages and disadvantages of urban villages. Analyzing their existence from different perspectives is crucial for finding a better direction for their future development, rather than simply focusing on their disadvantages.

This table briefly summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of urban villages. Comparing the two reveals that urban villages contribute significantly to a city, especially since they seem to shoulder some of the government's responsibility, attracting a large influx of migrant workers as affordable housing. These migrant workers, such as laborers, are the builders of the city. Therefore, urban villages lower the standard of urban living, serving as a foothold for many migrants.

Furthermore, the aesthetics of architecture are difficult to judge subjectively. Perhaps in the future, people will develop their own perspectives on urban villages. In a landscape of monotonous urban development, urban villages are unique entities, "living fossils" of urban development. Therefore, urban villages should not be completely demolished, erasing their existence.

The redevelopment of urban villages should be approached cautiously, rather than simply demolishing them all to build high-rises. Parts of the urban village should be

preserved. Perhaps in the future, with better urban land planning, the relatively lower redevelopment costs of urban villages compared to other urban buildings can be considered.

However, the disadvantages of urban villages are also obvious: poor living conditions and issues with natural lighting. Safety is also a concern, as urban villages, with their mix of commercial spaces on the ground floor and residential areas above, experience higher population mobility than purely residential areas. Furthermore, urban villages lack public spaces for leisure and recreation.

Therefore, the problems of urban villages need to be considered from multiple perspectives, rather than solely focusing on their disadvantages or advantages, in order to achieve a more comprehensive approach to their redevelopment.

*Figure 22. Summary of the advantages and disadvantages of urban villages.*

Advantage	Disadvantage
Historical witness – as a “living fossil” of urban development, it carries unique historical and cultural memories.	Lack of planning – high-density construction has resulted in a severe lack of public activity spaces such as parks and green areas.
Social welfare protection – providing rental income for displaced farmers and affordable housing for low-income urban residents.	Inadequate supporting facilities – There is a severe shortage of public services and infrastructure such as education, healthcare, and fire protection.
Economic function – acting as “informal low-rent housing,” it lowers the threshold for urban living.	The challenges of modernization – the complex socio-economic structure presents enormous challenges to its transformation and governance.
Development potential – refers to core potential land for future urban redevelopment, containing enormous economic value.	Security issues – high population mobility and weak management foundation.
Social buffer – effectively fulfilling some of the functions of social security housing, thus alleviating the government's housing pressure.	Poor living experience – issues include poor lighting, dampness, and poor street and alleyway environment.

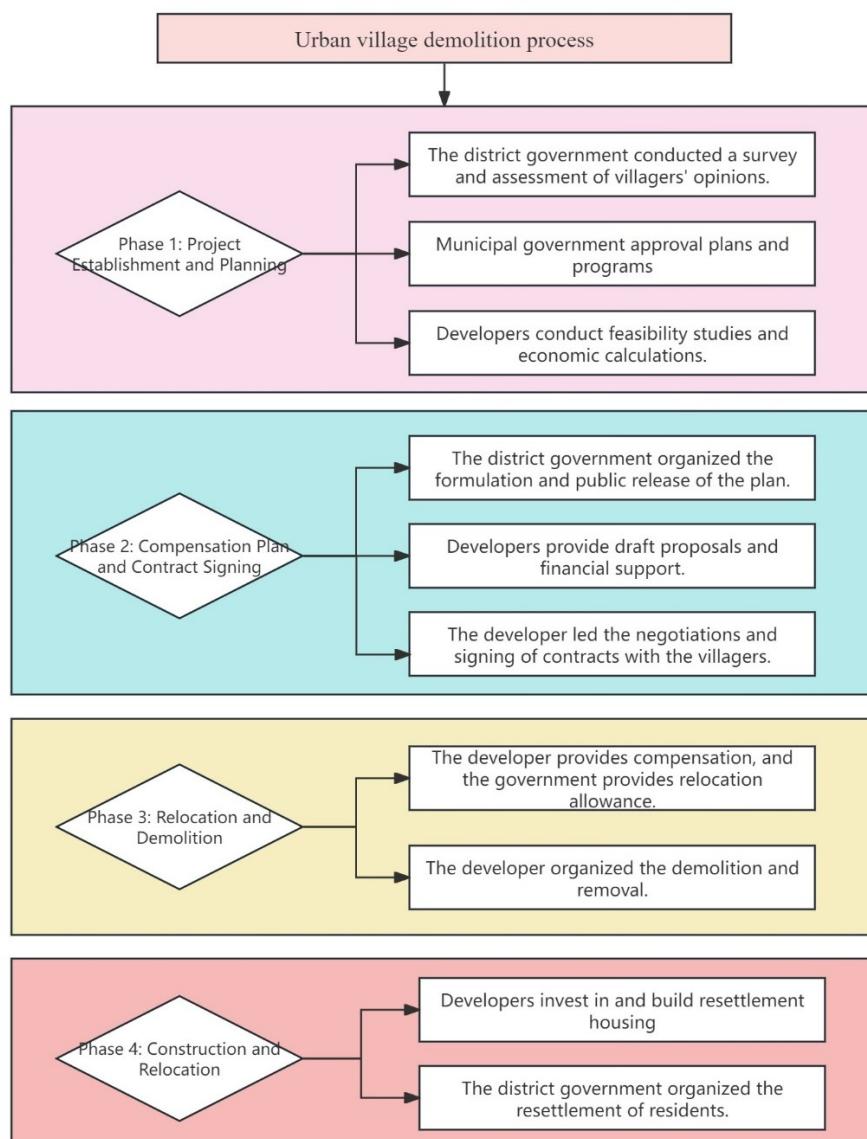
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## Chapter 6 Urban Village Redevelopment Methods

### •6.1 Urban village redevelopment process.

In previous years, there was almost no talk of urban village redevelopment. Instead, the entire village was demolished, and a small area was designated on the original site to build high-rise buildings. The original villagers all moved into the high-rises from the houses they built themselves.

*Figure 23. Urban village demolition process.*



Designed by author.

The transformation of urban villages takes a long time. From demolition to villagers moving into resettlement housing, it can take several years. During these years, the government will issue transitional allowances, which are compensation for villagers who rent houses elsewhere.

**•6.2Problems: problems facing the demolish of urban villages.**

In China, the [urban village](#) (or “village in the city”, *chengzhongcun*) is a representative type of informal settlement in city districts comprising several traditional rural villages gradually surrounded by built-up urban areas in the process of urbanisation. These “urban enclaves” include *high-density mid-rise* building blocks with diverse morphological patterns; and due to their central location, affordable rent, abundance of employment opportunities, as well as diverse land-use types and dynamic neighbourhood atmosphere, numerous people have opted to settle in these areas. (Pan & Du, 2021, p.01)

What problems will arise when urban villages are completely demolished?

**•*The disappearance of urban low-rent housing.***

Urban villages serve as some of the affordable housing needs; demolishing them means the disappearance of these low-rent housing options. This is the most crucial and pressing issue, as a large number of migrant workers, recent college graduates, and low-income individuals live in these villages. These are the only affordable housing options they have in the city. The demolition of urban villages directly impacts the survival of these people. With the disappearance of urban villages, these individuals will be forced to relocate to other remaining urban villages, their interests and livelihoods being disregarded.

•***The disintegration of social relations among villagers.***

For the original inhabitants, this village is not just a place to live, but a close-knit community full of geographical and kinship ties. Generations have lived here, passing down the land from generation to generation. It is not just a living space, but a space with memories and warmth. The demolition of the urban village will break this phenomenon. Moving from self-built houses to high-rise buildings, with locked doors, interpersonal relationships will become more distant, a far cry from the previous lifestyle of visiting each other's homes.

•***Increased commuting distance.***

Urban villages are ideally located, often in the city center, providing excellent housing options for low-income residents. Their demolition means these people will have to move to the suburbs or even further afield, to areas with lower housing prices, which will increase their commuting distances.

•***social space segregation.***

After the demolition of urban villages, upscale residential communities are often built, transforming urban spaces from diverse, mixed, and vibrant areas into singular places for those who can afford land. This increases the segmentation of social space, separating the rich, the poor, locals, and migrants into different areas.

•***The extinction of urban culture.***

Urban villages are the last vestiges of urban "street culture," where street food and local dialects symbolize another kind of culture. Completely demolishing urban villages and making them disappear from the urban space would make the city monotonous.

## **Summary of chapter 6.**

This chapter primarily describes the current state, process, and methods of urban village redevelopment in China. The process is complex and time-consuming, taking a considerable amount of time from the start of demolition to the complete resettlement of villagers. From the perspective of the main participants, it seems there are no losers in urban village demolition: the government gains performance and funds, developers profit from land price differences, and villagers receive compensation, often exceeding the social average in wealth. While most ordinary people struggle to buy even one house, villagers in demolished urban villages often own two, three, or even more properties, far exceeding the financial resources of the majority.

However, many problems arise after demolition. The main migrant population was not considered during this process. Migrants who contributed to urban development lived in affordable urban villages close to the city center, but with the demolition, these low-income individuals are forced to seek alternative urban villages.

Urban spatial segregation also emerges. Urban rents and housing prices typically divide different groups into different locations, but urban villages seem to defy this rule. In cities with exorbitant land prices, these low-income residents enjoy more diverse living spaces. The demolition of urban villages will trigger urban spatial segregation issues, as these low-income groups will no longer be able to afford the new housing prices.

A series of social problems will arise, so the demolition of urban villages needs to be considered from a more comprehensive and long-term perspective, rather than focusing solely on immediate interests.

Figure 24. Problems faced in the demolition of urban villages.

Problem Dimensions	Core problem description	Main impacts and consequences
<b>The disappearance of low-cost housing</b>	Urban villages represent the lowest-cost and most readily available source of housing in cities. Their large-scale demolition has directly led to the rapid and massive disappearance of "naturally affordable housing" for low-income groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>For low-income groups:</b> Migrant workers, young graduates, and service industry workers are forced to relocate to more distant and cheaper suburbs, leading to a sharp increase in living costs (rent, commuting) and even displacement from the city.</li> <li><b>For city operations:</b> Basic service industries (catering, delivery, cleaning, etc.) face pressure from labor shortages and rising labor costs, increasing the overall operating costs of the city.</li> </ul>
<b>The disappearance of a society based on personal relationships</b>	Urban villages are "familiar societies" formed based on geographical and kinship ties. After demolition and reconstruction, the original close-knit neighborhood relationships and social support networks are dismantled by physical space (high-rise buildings) and new community structures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>For Indigenous people:</b> Losing generations of neighbors and a familiar community environment can easily lead to feelings of social alienation and loneliness.</li> <li><b>Decreased community cohesion:</b> The collapse of informal support systems based on trust and reciprocity (such as temporary childcare, emergency loans, and information sharing) leads to a decline in community cohesion.</li> </ul>
<b>Increased commuting distance</b>	Residents (tenants) of the original urban villages were forced to relocate to the outskirts of the city, but their workplaces were mostly still in the city center, resulting in a significant increase in the distance between their work and residence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Increased separation of work and residence:</b> Commuting time and costs are soaring, severely impacting personal quality of life, mental and physical health, and family life.</li> <li><b>Urban traffic congestion:</b> This places enormous pressure on already congested urban public transportation and road systems, creating "commuting hell" during rush hour.</li> </ul>
<b>Urban spatial segregation</b>	The demolition of low-density, mixed-use urban villages and their replacement with gated, high-end residential communities and commercial complexes has resulted in a clear division of urban space according to socioeconomic status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Social stratification:</b> People from different income levels and backgrounds are physically separated, reducing opportunities for interaction and understanding, and exacerbating social prejudice and isolation.</li> <li><b>Spatial gentrification:</b> Urban areas become homogenized and exclusive, losing social diversity, and a spatial</li> </ul>

		pattern of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer is solidified.
<b>The disappearance of rural culture</b>	Urban villages are the embodiment of grassroots culture, local characteristics, and the vibrant atmosphere of daily life in cities. Their demolition means that this unique, spontaneous, and vital cultural form is being uprooted.	<p>- <b>Loss of cultural diversity:</b> Authentic food stalls, street crafts, local dialects, and informal social spaces have disappeared, making urban culture homogenous, commercialized, and standardized.</p> <p>- <b>Urban memory gap:</b> The historical context of urban development and folk memories have been erased, and newly built areas lack cultural depth and a sense of identity, becoming "soulless."</p>

Designed by author.

## Part III China's Current Planning System——National Level

### Chapter 7 Territorial Spatial Planning

"National territory" is the planning scope, referring to the territory covering the entire country; "space" refers to the land that carries "ecology, production and life" and the various levels of space above and below it (Wu, Z. 2022). Territorial planning is a strategic arrangement for the development, utilization and improvement of land, which takes the entire land space, including land (territory), water (territorial sea) and airspace, as its object, and aims to coordinate the relationship between economic development and population, resources and environment. It starts from the perspective of the rational development and utilization of land, water, minerals, climate, ocean, labor and other resources, determines the economic layout, clarifies the direction, goals, priorities and steps of comprehensive resource development, and makes strategic arrangements for the development, utilization and improvement of land (Ye, Y. 2023).

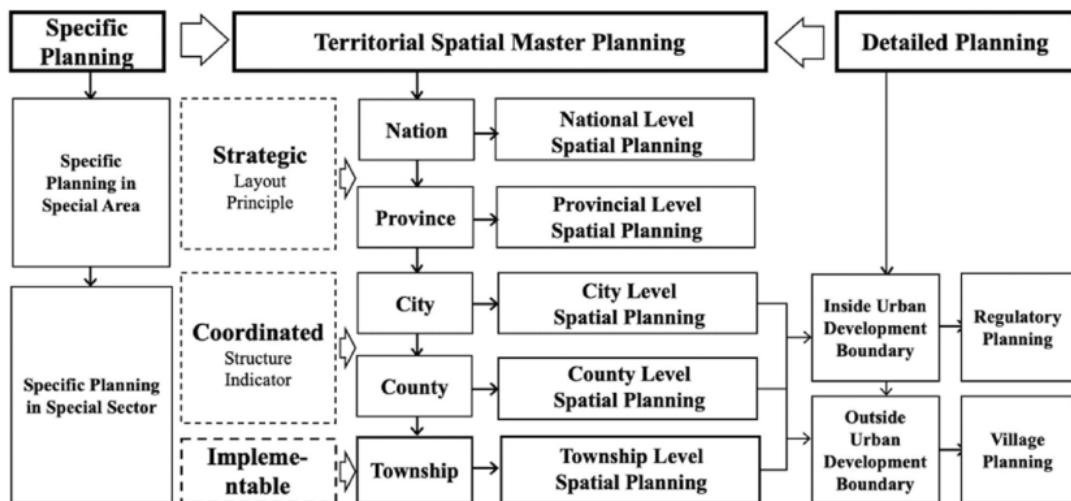
Its main contents include: First, a comprehensive evaluation of the types, quantities, quality, geographical distribution and development and utilization status of land and resources; second, clarifying the advantages and disadvantages of regional development, determining the plan for the development and utilization of major regional resources, the direction of regional economic and social development, and key comprehensive development zones; third, a reasonable layout of population, towns and economic construction; fourth, a unified arrangement of major infrastructure such as energy, water sources and transportation; and fifth, the formulation of comprehensive land management and protection plans and programs.(Ye, Y. 2023)

China's "five-level, three-category" territorial spatial planning has resolved the conflicts that previously existed between various plans. The five levels refer to the vertical management hierarchy, while the three categories refer to the different functional planning types within the same level, all of which are interconnected and collaborative. Regardless of the level or type of plan, the core control boundary of "three zones and three lines" must be strictly adhered to to ensure national ecological security, food security, and the healthy development of urbanization.

Three Zones: Ecological, Agricultural, and Urban Spaces.

Three Lines: Ecological Protection Red Line, Permanent Basic Farmland, and Urban Development Boundary.

*Figure 25. A comprehensive table of five levels and three categories.*



Source: Peng, Z., Zhang, L., Dong, S., & Li, W. (2023).

This image presents the overall framework of China's five-level, three-category land use plan. Combining these two images provides a basic understanding of China's current land use planning. The following sections will explain what each of the five levels governs and what the three categories are.

## 7.1 Five levels of territorial spatial planning.

China's current statutory territorial space planning corresponds to an administrative management system that is divided into five levels, namely: national, provincial, city, county, and township. The focus and depth of planning at different levels vary. National planning focuses on strategy, provincial planning focuses on coordination, and municipal, county, and township planning focus on implementation. (Wu, Z. 2022)

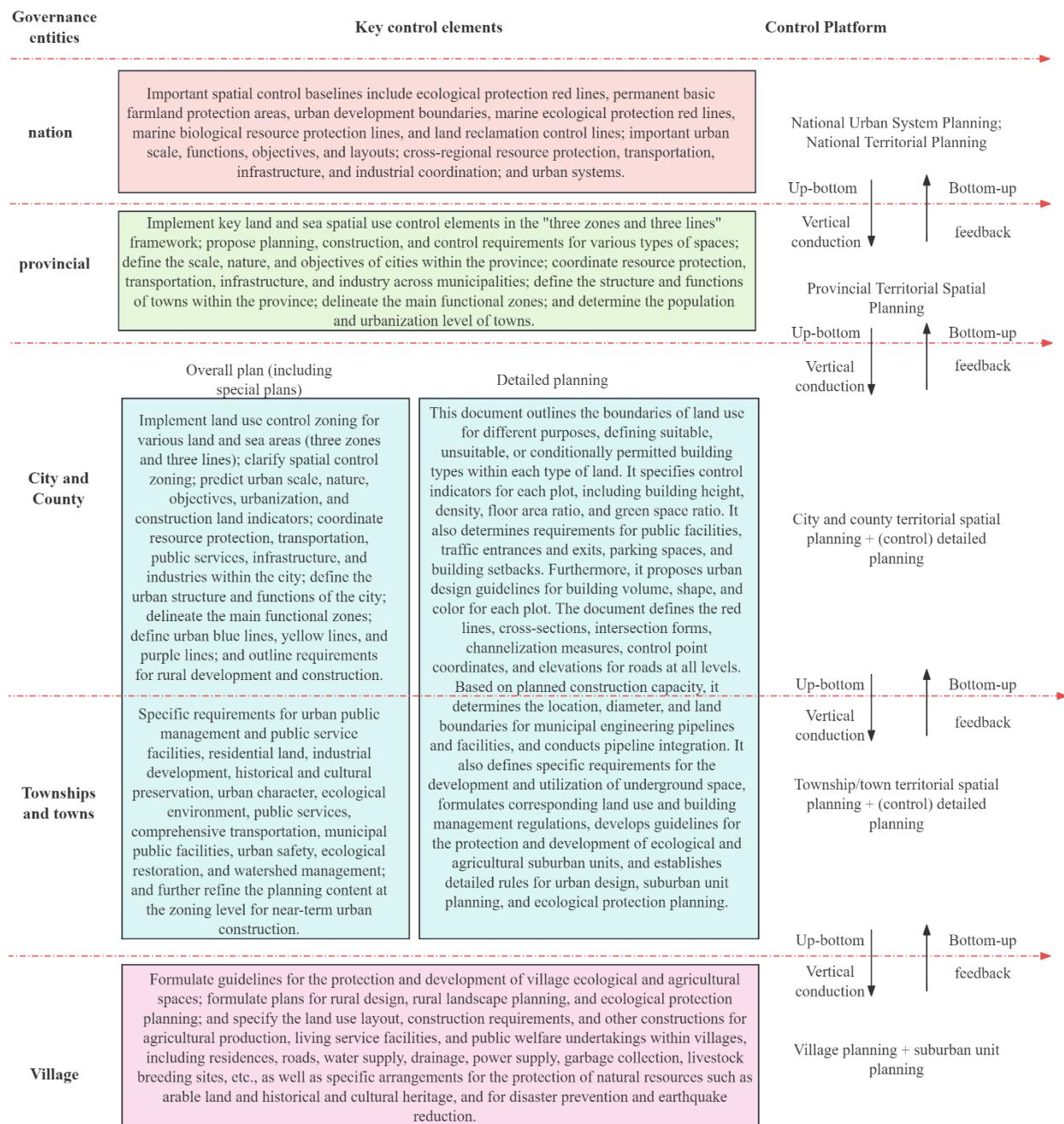
The image below uses Xiaozhai Town, Lantian County, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, China as an example to illustrate how the five levels are divided in China.

*Figure 26. Five levels of examples – taking Xiaozhai Town, Lantian County, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, China as an example.*



Designed by author.

Figure 27. The vertical management structure of spatial elements.



Author's translation. Source: Zhao & Li (2019).

This image clearly illustrates the hierarchical classification, from top to bottom, the relationships between different levels, and the directions of control at each level.

Figure 28. Territorial spatial planning-Five levels

Planning level	Features	Content
National	Overall arrangements for the national territory.	National policies and outline for the protection, development, utilization and restoration of land space.
Provincial	Implementation and deepening of national level.	Resource indicator regulation and project rule management, implementing the national space strategy and objectives and tasks, supporting major provincial space strategic arrangements, and embodying coordination.
City	Implementation and deepening of provincial.	The municipal level is the basis for formulating lower-level national land space master plans, detailed plans, and related special plans. It is also the basic basis for carrying out various development, protection, and construction activities and implementing national land space use control.
County and Town	The local government implements the requirements of the higher-level	County level, the focus is on overall control and use management, clarifying the city and county land development and protection pattern, implementing the main functional positioning and resource utilization control indicators, and reflecting the feasibility of implementation. The township level is oriented towards local management and planning and construction implementation, implements the indicators issued by the superior planning, ensures the implementation of boundaries, forms a blueprint for overall use control, and reflects the feasibility.

Source: Zhao, Y & Qi Y & Jiang B. (2021).

## 7.2 Three types of territorial spatial planning.

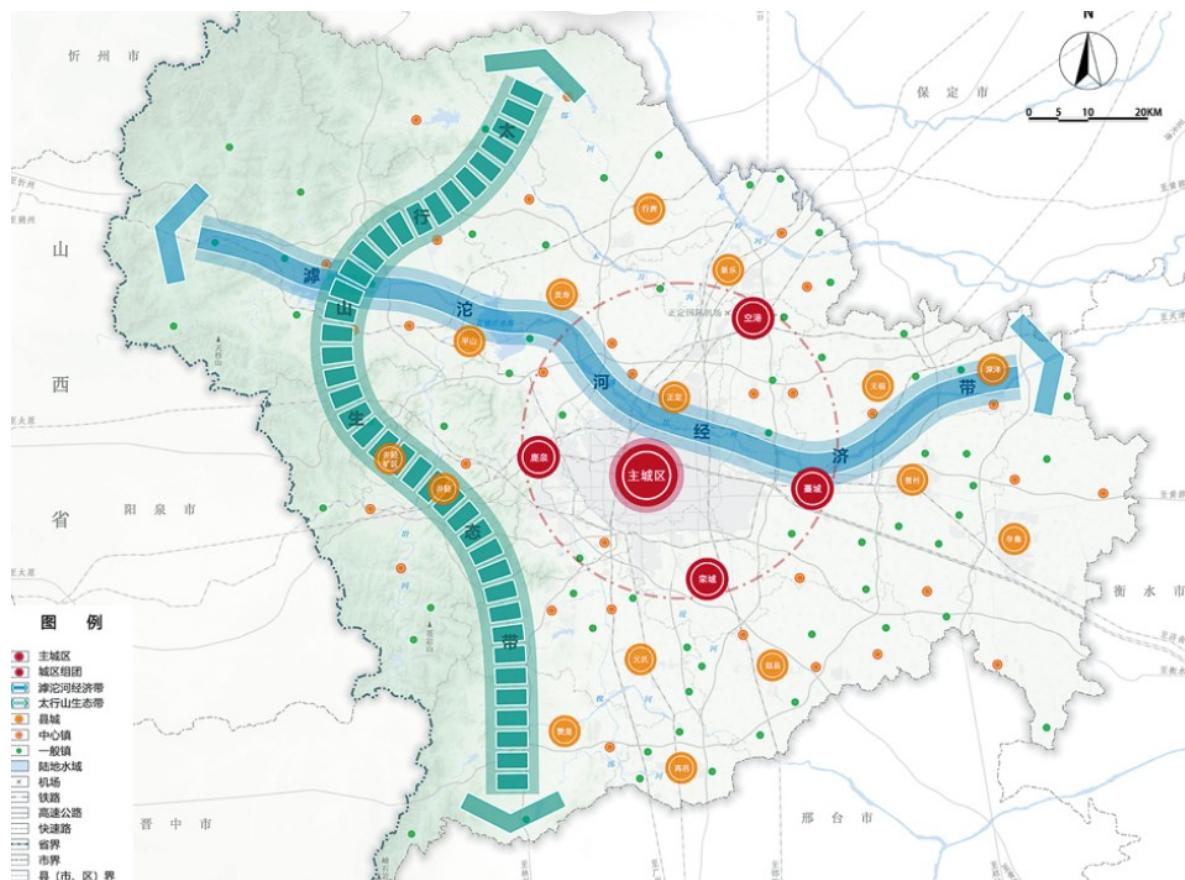
### •Overall planning.

The territorial spatial planning system consists of three types of core plans: the overall planning serves as a strategic blueprint, and clarifies the overall protection and development pattern and core indicators by demarcating the "three zones and three lines"; the sectoral plan

deepens the system layout of specific areas (such as transportation, ecology, and public services) under its framework to solve cross-regional coordination problems; the detailed planning serves as an implementation tool, converting the overall planning goals and special requirements into the use, development intensity, and facility configuration of specific plots, directly guiding engineering construction. The three types of plans form a complete closed loop of "strategic guidance-system deepening-implementation control", realizing unified control and efficient use of global spatial resources.

The following three images will illustrate the differences between these three types of planning.

*Figure 29. Shijiazhuang City Territorial overall planning.*



<https://www.sjz.gov.cn/columns/8166f236-f8c8-4504-8077-98e9ec77c1e6/202412/26/d40bfb0e-a77e-449b-8e4c-87d83710686f.html>

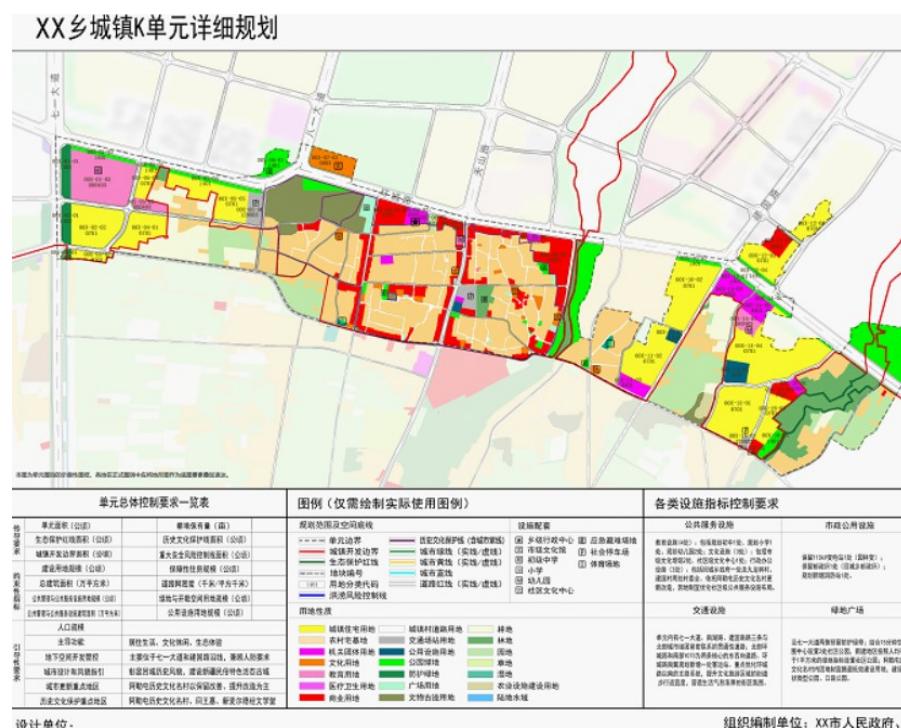
This image shows that the overall plan is very rough, basically defining the general direction of urban development, and is based on districts. However, this is very important, as

it essentially serves as a guiding principle for urban planning. It is comprehensive and fundamental, representing the top-level design and "master blueprint" of the administrative region's land space, and serving as the basis for developing the other two types of plans.

### •*Detailed Planning.*

Detailed planning specifies the type and indicators for each plot of land. As the direct legal basis for implementing land use control, the core outcome of detailed planning is embodied in the "drawings-planning" system. The planning drawings visually represent the spatial layout of various land uses (such as residential, commercial, industrial, and green space) using standardized color symbols; while the planning plans, in tabular form, assign detailed binding indicators such as land use number, nature, area, and development intensity to each plot in the drawings. Together, they constitute a complete technical document from spatial illustration to data management.

Figure 30. Detailed Planning (Urban Units) - Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.



### •Sectoral Planning.

Specialized plans are professional and systematic arrangements within the national land spatial planning system, targeting the spatial development, protection, and utilization of specific regions or fields. Within the "five-level, three-category" system, they play a crucial role in connecting the macro-strategic overall planning with the specific implementation of detailed plans.

They are highly specialized, focusing on a single professional field, such as water conservancy, transportation, or gas, or specific issues such as earthquake resistance, disaster prevention, and historical and cultural preservation. Their content possesses professional depth and technical complexity.

*Figure 31. Sectoral Planning (Sectoral Planning for Gas Engineering in Xushui District, Baoding City (2019-2030))*

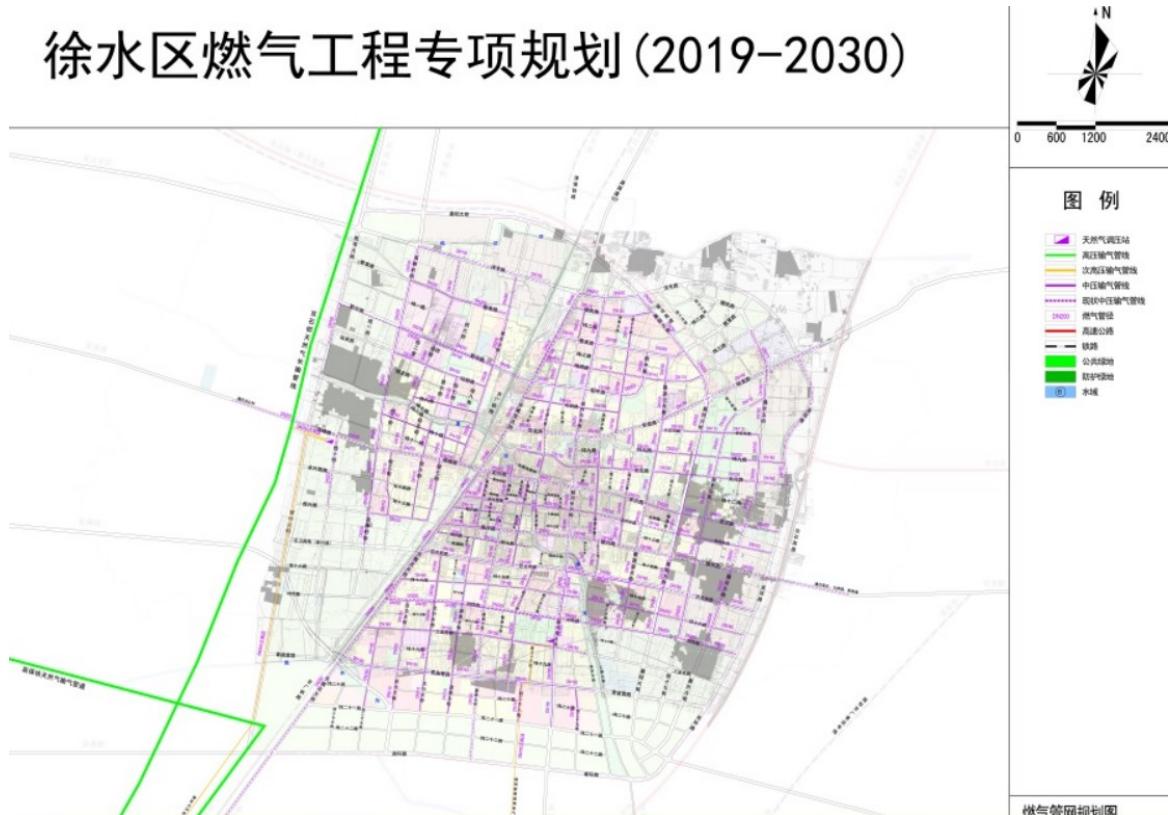


Figure 32. Territorial spatial planning-Three types.

Overall planning	Sectoral Planning	Detailed Planning
The planning policy for the space is comprehensive, such as protection, development, utilization and restoration.	Sectoral plans for specific development and protection, such as sectoral plans for transportation and infrastructure, sectoral plans for river basins, urban agglomerations, metropolitan areas, and sectoral plans for disaster prevention, health and safety against natural disasters and infectious diseases.	Implementative arrangements for specific land use and development intensity.

Source: Wu, Z. (2022)

## Chapter 8. The current policies for Urban village

In 2013, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed the concept of new urbanization construction at the Central Urbanization Work Conference: "Seeing the mountains, seeing the water, and retaining the nostalgia for the countryside." the country's urban planning officially shifted from "incremental development" to "stock optimization." (Zhang,2024)

In 2019, the 15th Plenary Session of the CPC Central Committee emphasized the need to strengthen the renovation of dilapidated urban areas and to regard it as a major livelihood and development project (Zhang,2024) .

In 2021, the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development proposed in the "Notice on Preventing Large-scale Demolition and Construction in the Implementation of Urban Renewal Actions (Draft for Comments)" that urban villages should provide low-cost housing, discourage large-scale demolition, and prevent market imbalances. Steady transformation, improve services and infrastructure, improve the environment, and eliminate hidden dangers. It is advocated to classify and dispose of buildings, and promote small-scale renewal and micro-renovation. It can be seen that under the background of gradual renewal, the transformation of urban villages is also transforming from "comprehensive demolition" to "local optimization". (Zhang,2024)

In 2023, the Guiding Opinions on Actively and Steadily Promoting the Reconstruction of Urban Villages in Megacities and Extra-megacities insisted on putting people at the center and emphasized that the reconstruction work should meet people's expectations for a better life, which is consistent with the concept of gradual micro-renewal focusing on improving the quality of life of residents. It is encouraged to implement reconstruction according to actual conditions, including demolition and new construction, rectification and upgrading, and combination of demolition and renovation. The introduction of this policy marks that the

reconstruction of urban villages has entered a new stage, providing strong support for promoting the high-quality development of megacities and extra-megacities (Source: Ministry of Natural Resources of the People 's Republic of China).

In 2024, the National Land Space Planning Policy Guidelines for Urban Village Renovation will give full play to the leading role of national land space planning in urban village renovation, actively and steadily advance the work, and build a livable, resilient and smart city. The national land space master plan is the superior basis for the preparation of the detailed plan for urban village renovation. The detailed plan is the legal basis for issuing urban village renovation planning permits and implementing urban village renovation activities, and should be prepared based on the master plan.

All localities should clarify the planning objectives, key areas, rhythm and timing of urban village renovation in the overall national land space planning according to local conditions, improve the city's energy level and core competitiveness, promote greater coordination between urban and rural areas, and promote the in-depth implementation of national strategies.

Make up for the shortcomings of facilities. Make full use of the original facilities, make up for the shortcomings of supporting facilities, optimize the layout of affordable housing, build a 15-minute community living circle, take into account the connection and co-construction and sharing of facilities inside and outside the unit, and coordinate facilities with adjacent areas.

Strengthen urban design and style control. Propose urban design contents such as building height, skyline, important landscape nodes, green space system and open space, important corridors such as wind corridors and visual corridors, and characteristic style control.(Source: Ministry of Natural Resources of the People 's Republic of China.)

All localities should clarify the planning objectives, key areas, rhythm and timing of urban village renovation in the overall national land space planning according to local conditions, so as to enhance the urban level and core competitiveness, promote greater coordination between urban and rural areas, and promote the in-depth implementation of national strategies.

Make up for the shortcomings of facilities. Make full use of existing facilities, make up for the shortcomings of supporting facilities, optimize the layout of affordable housing, build a 15-minute community living circle, take into account the connection and co-construction and sharing of facilities inside and outside the unit, and coordinate facilities with adjacent areas.

Strengthen urban design and landscape control. Propose urban design contents such as building height, skyline, important landscape nodes, green space system and open space, important corridors such as wind corridors and visual corridors, and characteristic landscape control. (Source: Ministry of Natural Resources of the People 's Republic of China.)

These policy changes indicate a significant shift in the government's attitude towards the redevelopment of urban villages. The approach has evolved from initial complete demolition to implementation of redevelopment based on actual conditions, including methods such as demolition and new construction, renovation and upgrading, and a combination of demolition and redevelopment.

## Part IV. Case study city-Xi'an planning policy——City Level

### Chapter 9. Xi'an 's Urban Overview

#### 9.1 Xi'an city location.

Xi'an is located in the Guanzhong Plain in the middle of the Yellow River Basin in inland China. It is one of the birthplaces of the Chinese nation and ancient oriental civilization. Xi'an has a history of more than 3,100 years as a city and more than 1,100 years as a capital. 13 feudal dynasties established their capitals here. The ancient "Silk Road" started from Chang'an and went west to ancient Rome. Xi'an is a world-famous historical city (source: Xi'an Municipal People's Government Official Website).

*Figure 33. Map of Xi'an's location in China.*

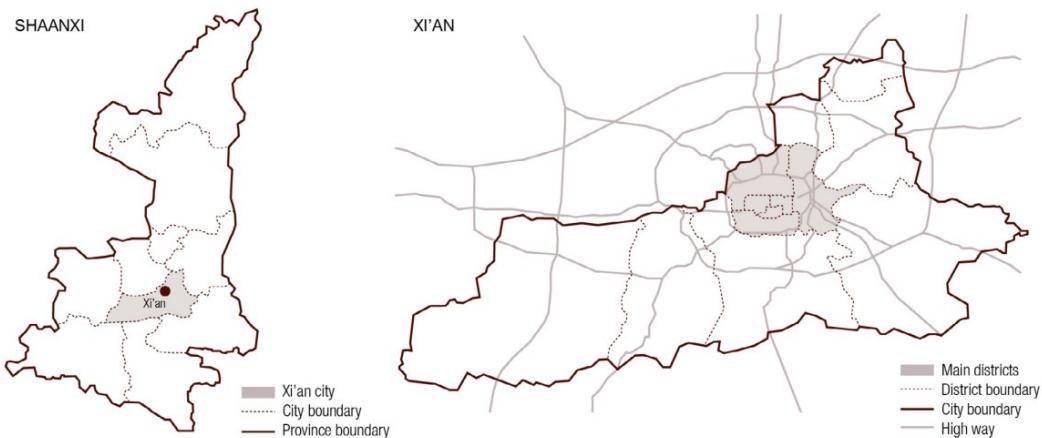


Source: WANG, Y., & GAO, Y. (2017).

Xi'an is located in the central part of the Guanzhong Plain. It is an international metropolis and a national central city that the country has clearly built. It has been rated as a national sanitary city, a national garden city, China's city with the best image, China's city

with the best international image, China's happiest city, and a national civilized city (source: Xi'an Municipal People's Government Official Website).

*Figure 34. Location of Xi'an, China.*



Source: WANG, Y., & GAO, Y. (2017).

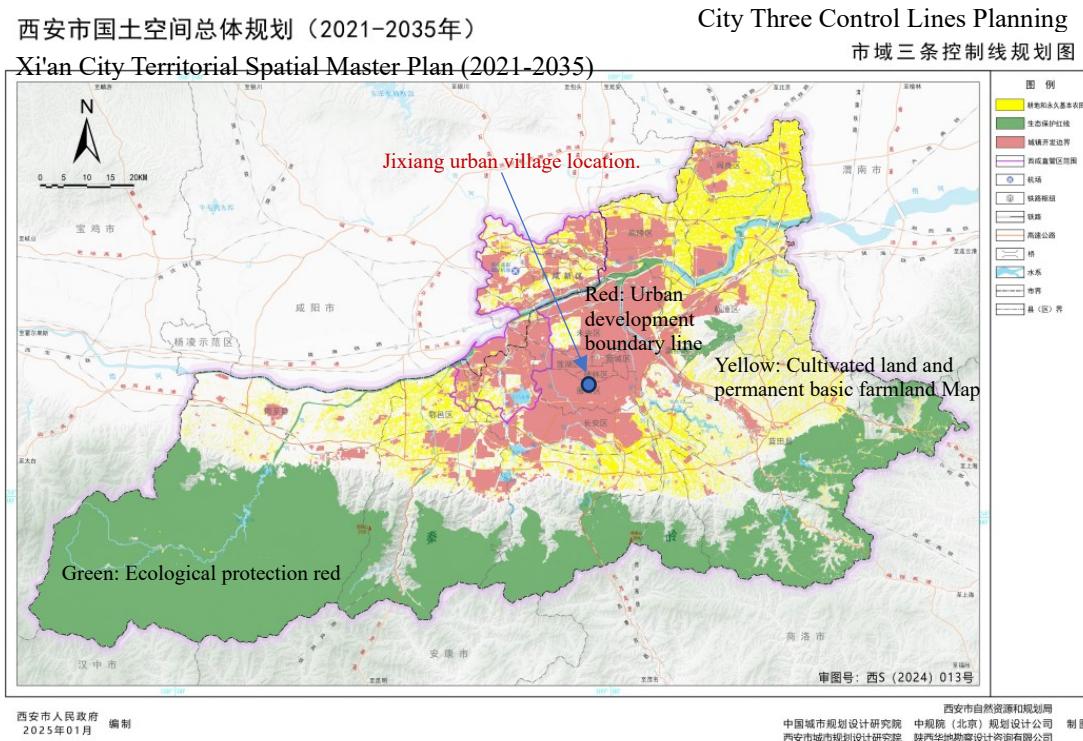
## 9.2 Xi'an city overall planning.

### •*Xi'an city positioning.*

Xi'an is the capital of Shaanxi Province, an important central city in western China, a national historical and cultural city, an international comprehensive transportation hub, and an important national scientific research and cultural and educational center (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 11).

From the planning map of Xi'an's three control lines, it is clear which areas are urban areas and which are rural areas, while Jixiang Village is located in the red urban development zone. These control lines govern urban planning, so it is essential to understand them as fundamental information.

Figure 35. Xi'an City Territorial Space Planning-Three Line Control Map.



Source: Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Natural Resources and Planning

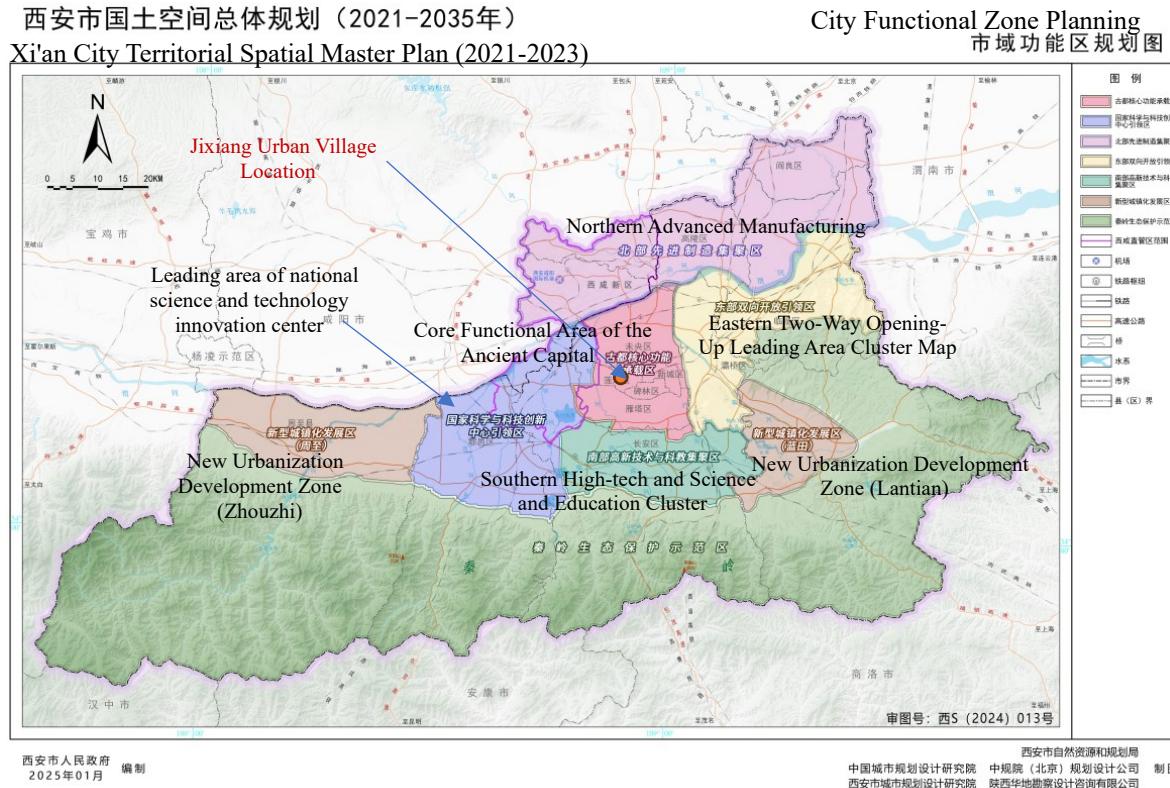
## •Xi'an city territorial space planning- urban functional area planning.

Western economic center, scientific and technological innovation center, advanced manufacturing base, foreign exchange center, and international tourist destination (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 12).

"Central Optimization": Focusing on the city's core functions, enhancing modern service functions and innovation vitality, and improving its ability to radiate and drive regional development and participate in international competition. For industries that do not conform to the core functional positioning, new additions must be strictly controlled, and existing industries must be relocated in an orderly manner. In the Ming and Qing Dynasty Xi'an City and the Sui and Tang Dynasty historical and cultural area, promote urban renewal and quality improvement, implement relevant planning requirements for historical and

cultural protection, and further highlight the unique features of the ancient capital. (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 74).

*Figure 36. Xi'an City Territorial Space Planning- Urban functional area planning map.*



Source: Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Natural Resources and Planning.

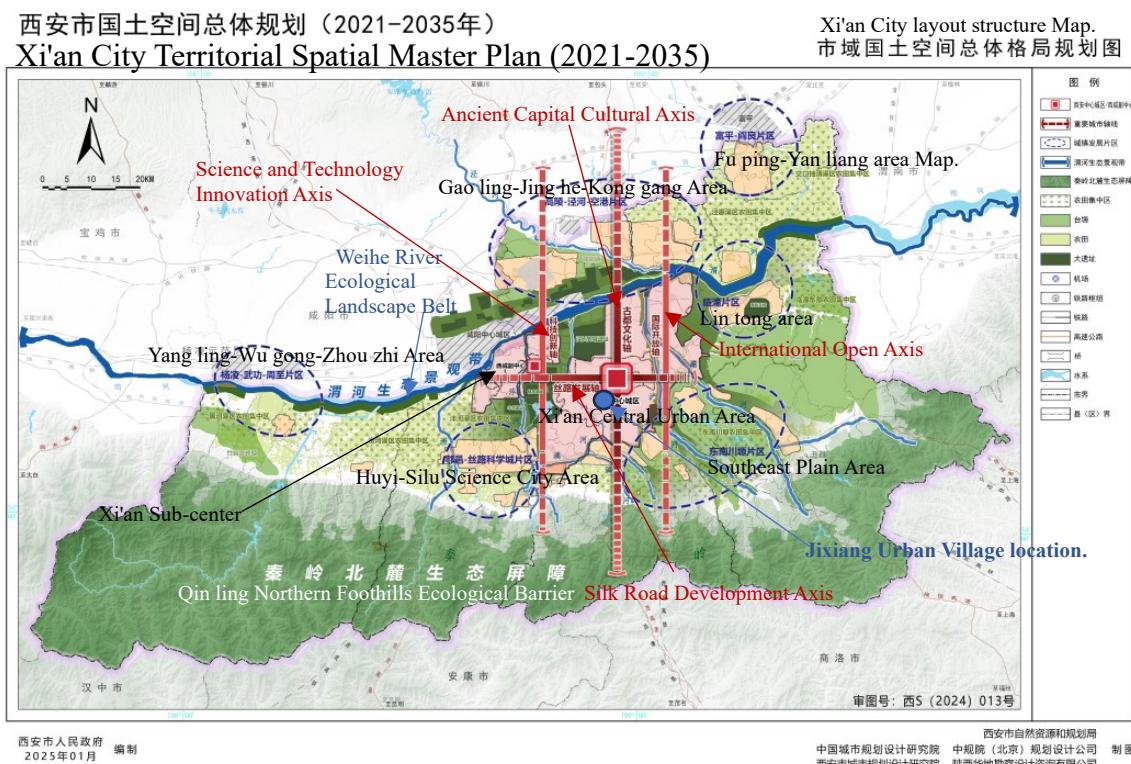
According to the urban functional zoning plan, the area where Jixiang Village is located is planned as the core functional area of the ancient capital. Therefore, the redevelopment of urban villages must take into account the guiding direction of this higher-level plan.

•Xi'an city territorial space planning- layout structure planning.

"One screen and one belt": refers to the ecological barrier at the northern foot of the Qinling Mountains and the Weihe River ecological landscape belt (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 23).

"Eight rivers and seven fields" refers to the main rivers such as Weihe River, Jinghe River, Bahe River, Chanhe River, Fuhe River, Bahe River, Fenghe River and Laohe River, and the farmland concentration areas in Jiaokouchuowei irrigation area, Jinghui irrigation area, eastern Lintong, southeast Sichuan plateau, Fenghe irrigation area, Laohe irrigation area and Heihe irrigation area (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 23).

Figure 37. Xi'an City layout structure Map.



Source: Xi'an Municipal Bureau of Natural Resources and Planning.

"Double core and six areas": refers to the central urban area of Xi'an, the Xixian sub-center (Fengdong and Fengxi of Xixian New District), and the six urban development areas of Fuping-Yanliang, Yangling-Wugong-Zhouzhi, Gaoling-Jinghe-Airport, Huyi-Silk Road Science City, Lintong, and Southeast Sichuan Plateau, forming a linkage development pattern with distinctive features, division of labor and cooperation, and complementary functions.

Promote the in-depth development of Xi'an-Xianyang integration, build the core area of Xi'an Metropolitan Circle with the central urban area of Xianyang, and jointly lead the high-quality development of the region (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 23).

“Axis inheritance”: give full play to the important role of urban axes such as the ancient capital cultural axis, the Silk Road development axis, the science and technology innovation axis and the international open axis in inheriting the historical spatial order and guiding the direction of urban development, and demonstrate the charm that connects history and the future (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 23).

Enhance the core competitiveness of the central urban area The central urban area focuses on the core functional positioning, develops cultural creativity, commercial trade, scientific and technological innovation and other functions with international competitiveness, guarantees the new industrial space integrating advanced manufacturing and modern service industries, and orderly relieves non-core functions such as general manufacturing bases, regional logistics and warehousing facilities and professional markets.

Promote the balanced development of spatial structure, continue to promote urban renewal, make up for the shortcomings of public services, parks and green spaces, municipal and disaster prevention, mitigation and relief facilities, build an urban public space system with historical and cultural characteristics, and create a livable city with humanistic charm. By 2035, the permanent population of the central urban area will be about 9.1 million (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 77).

In the central urban area, we will accelerate the renovation of various characteristic blocks such as Xiaoyan Pagoda, Shuncheng Lane, and Xingfu Forest Belt, improve the quality of urban tourism, and give full play to the comprehensive functions of leisure, recreation, and cultural experience. We will give full play to the characteristics of regional resources, layout a number of tourist gathering areas, and form a slow-enjoyment cultural experience section in the ancient city (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 84).

Protect and inherit intangible cultural heritage Actively use the material heritage space to provide a display and inheritance space and exchange platform for intangible cultural heritage, and promote the inheritance and promotion of intangible cultural heritage. Provide space carriers for other excellent traditional cultures such as time-honored brands, old place names, celebrities, operas, calligraphy and painting, clothing, medicine, food, temple fairs, important historical events, and former residences of celebrities from past dynasties, and strengthen publicity and display (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 126).

Firstly, Jixiang Village is located in the city center of Xi'an, which, in a broader sense, serves the functions of Xi'an as a historical and cultural city, and the higher-level planning encourages innovation, cultural creativity, and new industrial spaces. Secondly, as a tourist city, the city center needs to improve the quality of urban tourism and fully leverage its comprehensive functions of leisure, entertainment, and cultural experiences. These general directions provide strong guidance for the later transformation of Jixiang Village.

#### **•Guidance of Xi'an's spatial planning on urban village reconstruction.**

According to the current situation of the urban village population and land ownership, the planning objectives of urban village renovation are comprehensively determined by

considering the resource and environmental carrying capacity of transportation, municipal administration, public services, and other factors, as well as urban space quality, safety and resilience. Local policies, regulations and technical standards for urban village renovation are improved, and policies on land acquisition, reserve and replacement are refined in accordance with relevant national regulations. Comprehensively use methods such as demolition and reconstruction, improvement and upgrading, and combination of demolition and renovation to coordinate the promotion of urban village renovation and affordable housing construction (Xi'an City Territorial Spatial Planning - Regulations No. 169).

### **9.3. The evolution stages of Xi'an's urban village.**

By the end of 2022, the urbanization rate of the national permanent population will reach 65.22%, and the urbanization rate of the permanent population in Xi'an will reach 79.59% in the same year (Zhang, 2025). Xi'an is the economic, political and cultural center of Shaanxi Province. Its superior geographical location has attracted a large number of migrant populations. Due to the long-term focus on the construction and development of new urban areas, the surrounding villages that have lost farmland due to urban development have been neglected, resulting in the prominent problem of urban villages in Xi'an.

#### **•*The first stage (1949-1960): the initial formation of urban villages.***

1949-1960. During this period, the built-up area of Xi'an increased from 13.2km<sup>2</sup> to 80km<sup>2</sup>, and the population increased from 396,000 to 1.01 million. The expansion of the built-up area of the city led to the formation of urban villages (Zhang, 2025).

•***The second stage (1960-2000): forming a typical urban village.***

During this period (1960-1980), the country was in the ten-year Cultural Revolution period, and the urbanization process basically stagnated. Since the reform and opening up, Xi'an's urban construction has entered a stage of rapid development, and the city's construction land has mainly developed in the southwest and north of the city. By 1990, the area of the urban core area reached 133.6KM<sup>2</sup>. During this period, some villages around the urban area were surrounded by the city (Zhang, 2025).

•***The third stage (2000-2006): Beginning to renovate urban villages.***

Since 2000, with the introduction of the "Western Development" strategy, Xi'an has been given a rare opportunity to accelerate its economic development and urbanization process, and its urban construction has entered a rapid development stage. By 2002, the urban area had reached 193.4km<sup>2</sup>, and the population had reached more than 4 million. In the urban planning during this period, the urban-rural integration strategy was strengthened, and the transformation of urban villages began. During the period from 2000 to 2005, the transformation of urban villages in Xi'an continued, and some villages were transformed into joint-stock companies (Zhang, 2025).

•***The fourth stage (2007-present): the comprehensive development stage of urban village reconstruction.***

Since 2007, Xi'an has entered a comprehensive development stage of urban village reconstruction. That year, the "Xi'an Urban Village Reconstruction Management Measures" was officially implemented, marking the introduction of a series of new policies. Xi'an has explored a unique reconstruction method. In 2008, Xi'an quickly promoted the "urban village" reconstruction plan and launched 50 reconstruction projects, involving the

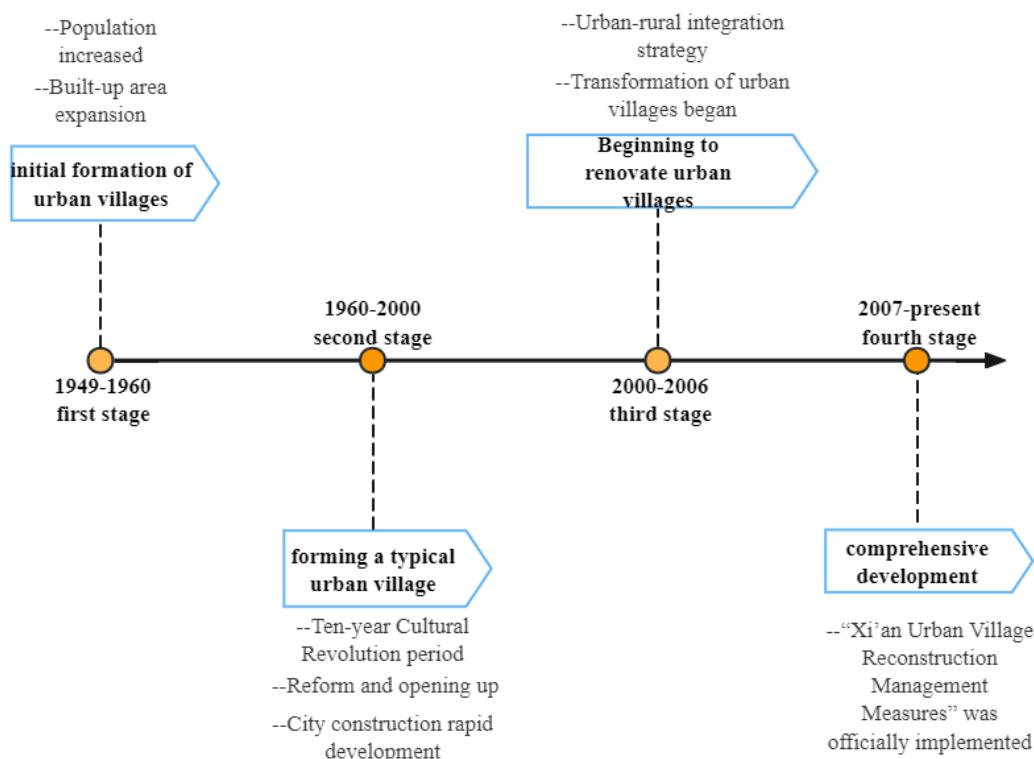
demolition of an area of 3.5 million square meters of villages and the construction of a new area of 1.8 million square meters, which promoted the process of urban-rural integration.

In 2018, Xi'an City planned to demolish and clear all 114 urban villages and carry out comprehensive renovation of 64 of them within three years.

By 2020, Xi'an had included 31 urban villages in its renovation plan in preparation for the 14th National Games. During this period, the government promoted the renovation of urban villages in Xi'an on a large scale, marking the beginning of a comprehensive development phase (Zhang, 2025).

The number of urban villages in Xi'an has continued to increase from 187 in 2004 to 286 in 2013 as the city expands. By 2023, there will be a total of 445 urban villages. As of 2021, there are 397 urban villages that have been demolished or are being demolished, and 242 urban villages that have not been demolished (Zhang, 2025).

*Figure 38. Timeline of urban village development in Xi'an.*

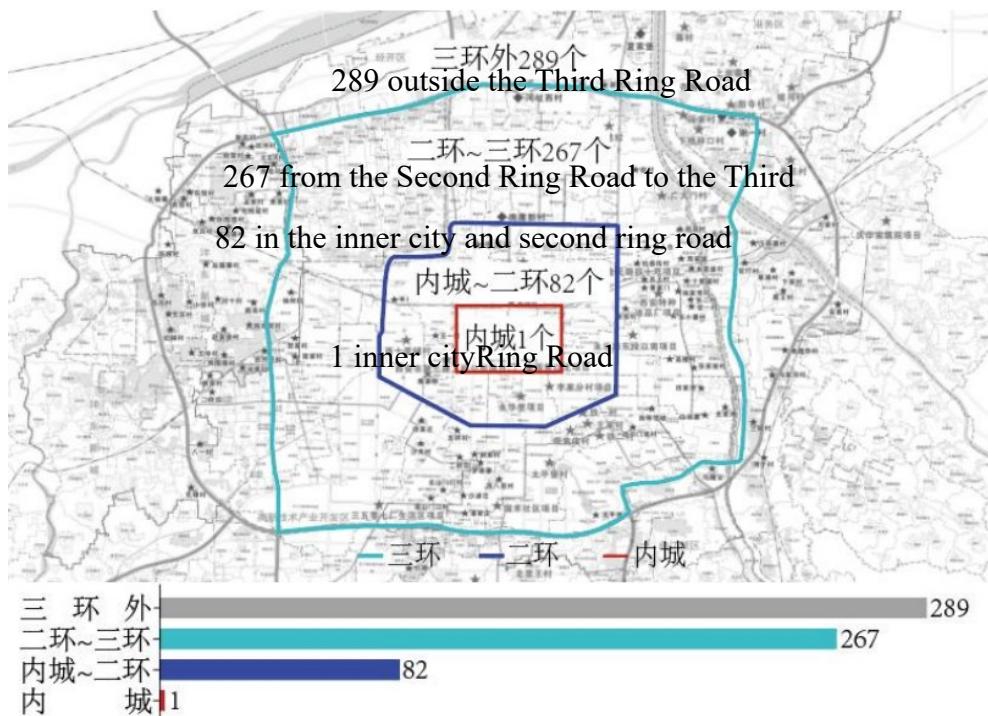


## 9.4 Basic situation of urban village in Xi'an.

### •Number of urban villages in Xi'an.

The number of urban villages in Xi'an has continued to increase from 187 in 2004 to 286 in 2013 as the city expands. In the 2018 "Xi'an Urban and Rural Construction Annals", Xi'an has a total of 6 urban construction districts, namely Baqiao District, Weiyang District, Yanta District, Lianhu District, Beilin District, and Xincheng District. There are a total of 639 urban villages in the six districts. The number of urban villages within the urban planning land of the six districts is shown in Table 2.1. Baqiao District has 230 urban villages, the largest number, and Xincheng District has 13, the smallest number. From the inner city to the third ring road, there is 1 urban village in the inner city, 82 urban villages between the inner city and the second ring road, 267 urban villages between the second ring road and the third ring road, and 289 urban villages outside the third ring road, the largest number (Gu, 2022).

Figure 39. Number of urban villages in Xi'an.



Source: Zhang, 2024.

## 9.5 the transformation model of urban villages in Xi'an.

- government-led.***

Government-led This is a top-down urban village renovation model in which the government plays a leading role. In the entire process, the government first takes the lead in establishing an office organization related to urban village renovation, and then controls the funds of the renovation project to carry out infrastructure construction. After the initial stage of the project is completed, the government increases the economic benefits of the village collective by regulating the land use value, thereby ultimately achieving the goal of a brand new community, improved urban image, and stable and coordinated social development (Gu, 2022).

- developer intervention.***

This model is that the developer plays a leading role and the government is only responsible for guidance. Usually, the relevant government departments will bid for the projects that need to be transformed through public bidding or entrustment, and the projects will be completed independently by the winning bidder.

- Village collective self-built.***

The main body of this transformation model is the village collective, which is responsible for all transformation-related matters, including raising funds, determining transformation tasks, and allocating transformation tasks. This urban village transformation model is spontaneously organized by villagers, and is a bottom-up transformation method overall.

## 9.6 Resettlement methods for urban villages.

- ***Centralized resettlement of villagers.***

Centralized resettlement is to resettle the villagers of a whole village in an independent community. A resettlement community usually accommodates villagers from the same village. This model is generally suitable for urban villages with large populations. This resettlement method continues the feelings between villagers and has a higher degree of integration. Villagers will also hold activities on specific festivals.

- ***Villagers merged and resettled.***

Combined resettlement is to integrate the reconstruction plans of multiple urban villages into one reconstruction project, so the villagers of multiple urban villages will be resettled in the same resettlement community (Gu, 2022). Generally, it is composed of smaller urban villages. Compared with the resettlement of a single urban village, the villagers are more unfamiliar with each other.

- ***Mixed resettlement of villagers.***

Mixed resettlement is a model in which the resettlement houses for the original villagers and the commercial houses for sale are placed in the same community, which makes it possible for other urban residents and the urbanized original villagers to coexist in the community (Gu, 2022). The facades of such resettlement buildings are more designed than those of pure resettlement houses.

## Part V Spatial Planning Policy of Yanta District, Xi'an——District level

### Chapter10. Basic Situation of Yanta District

The Jixiang urban village is located in the Yanta district, so figuring out the urban policy about the Yanta district is helpful for finding renovation methods for urban villages.

Start from the Xi'an Yanta District Territorial spatial planning (2021-2035). From this planning, we will know the specific policy for different areas.

Historical Resources: Yanta District is rich in historical and cultural resources, including 5 national key cultural relics protection sites (one of which is also a World Cultural Heritage), 3 Shaanxi Provincial Cultural Relics Protection Sites, 3 Xi'an Municipal Cultural Relics Protection Sites, 4 historical buildings, 6 other historical sites, and 1 municipal red cultural heritage site (source: Yanta district territorial spatial planning).

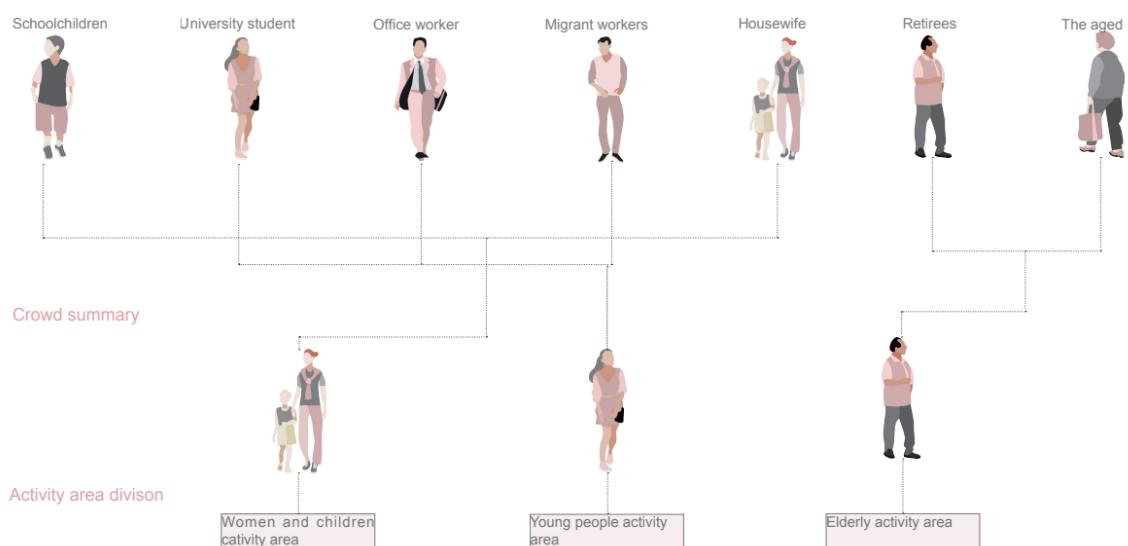
Yanta District has abundant tourism resources, which means there are a lot of tourists. Therefore, the renovation of urban villages can be considered to attract tourists, and Jixiang Village should be developed into a unique area, different from other historical and tourist areas.

Scientific and Educational Resources: Yanta District boasts strong scientific research, culture, and education, boasting 39 institutions of higher learning, 55 provincial-level and above research institutes, and 67 key laboratories, attracting approximately 140,000 scientific and technological professionals (source: Yanta district territorial spatial planning).

Yanta District has abundant educational resources, which means there is a large young population. When renovating, the spatial needs of this population can be taken into account to create a more diverse, youthful and attractive area.

As the core functional carrier of the ancient capital, Yanta District should implement the core functions of a megacity, strengthen its scientific research, cultural education, and commercial trade services, showcase the cultural charm of the ancient capital, strictly control the scale and intensity of construction, guide population expansion to surrounding areas, rationally enhance modern service functions and innovation vitality, and promote urban renewal and quality improvement (source: Yanta district territorial spatial planning).

Figure 40. Population analysis of Jixiang Village.



Designed by author.

The later renovation of Jixiang Village should not only take into account the guiding direction of the higher-level plan, but also be carried out according to the spatial needs of different groups of people in Jixiang Village.

## 10.1 Yanta district overall planning.

### •Yantai district spatial overall planning policy.

The plan forms an overall national spatial pattern of "three centers driving, four axes leading, and ten districts linking".

Figure 41. Yanta District Territorial Spatial Master Planning Policy.

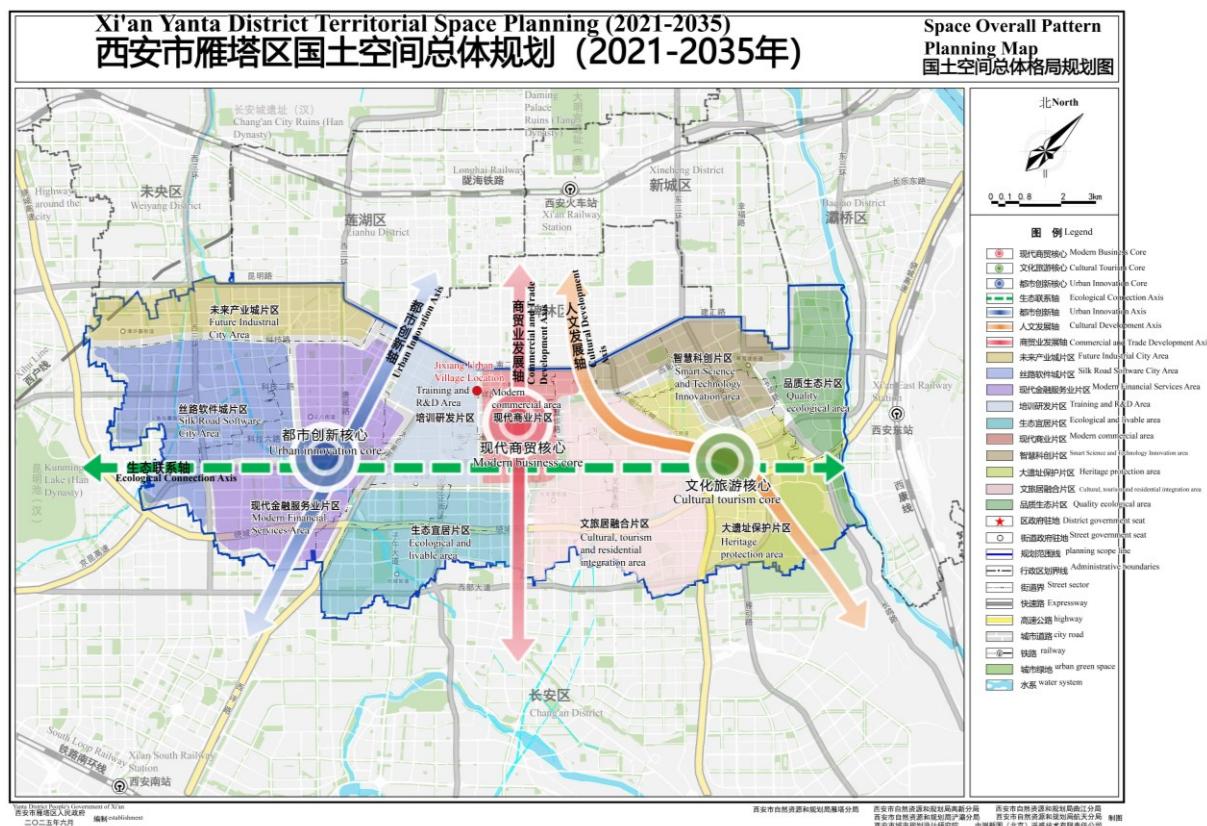
Three Centers	
Modern business core	Relying on the Xiaozhai business district, with the goal of creating the highest-quality business district in Northwest China, we will optimize the public space environment and promote high-quality commercial and business development;
Cultural tourism core	Relying on the Qujiang New District and leveraging the advantages of Shaanxi and Xi'an in terms of culture, tourism, and cultural relics, we will create a new core for the development of cultural industries in Xi'an and even the whole country.
Urban innovation core	Relying on the Silk Road Software City area and focusing on business finance, headquarters economy, software research and development and other functions, we will create a core area of urban financial openness and innovation.
Four-axis leading	
Commercial and Trade Development Axis	The area along Chang'an South Road should consolidate the strategic position of Xi'an's central city axis and integrate cultural, tourism, commerce, finance, office and other resource elements;
Humanities Development Axis	The axis refers to the area along Yanta Road and Qujiang Avenue, which should connect the surrounding cultural and tourism elements and strengthen the integrated development of culture, commerce and tourism;
Urban Innovation Axis	The axis refers to the area along Tangyan Road, Xifeng Road and Xitai Road, which should promote the agglomeration of emerging industries and cultivate and develop high-tech industries;
Ecological Connection Axis	It refers to the linear park built on the ruins of the Sui Daxing and Tang Chang'an cities, connecting the entire Yanta area.
Ten districts linkage	

It refers to the future industrial city area, training and R&D area, modern commercial area, smart science and technology innovation area, ecological and livable area, Silk Road Software City area, modern financial service area, cultural tourism and residential integration area, large heritage protection area, and high-quality ecological area, forming a linkage development pattern with unique characteristics, division of labor and cooperation, and complementary functions, and jointly leading the high-quality development of Yanta.

Source: territorial spatial planning.

As can be seen from the planning map, Jixiang Village is located at the intersection of the training and research and development zone and the modern commercial and trade zone, so the industries and future development of Jixiang Village can move closer to these two directions.

Figure 42. Overall Layout Map of Yanta District Territorial Spatial Planning.



Source: territorial spatial planning

• ***Yanta district Spatial overall planning policy——Guidance to Jixiang Village.***

Based on the Yanta District's overall land and space planning policies and Jixiang Village's location within the plan, it can be concluded that Jixiang Village is adjacent to the commercial core centered on Xiaozhai. This area aims to be developed into the Northwest's premier high-quality business district.

Thus, future development policies for Jixiang Village could refer to the Yanta District plan and consider whether Jixiang Village can also develop its unique advantages and employ alternative business models.

## 10.2 Yanta district landscape planning

• ***Yanta District Landscape planning policy.***

*Figure 43. Yanta District Urban Design Policy*

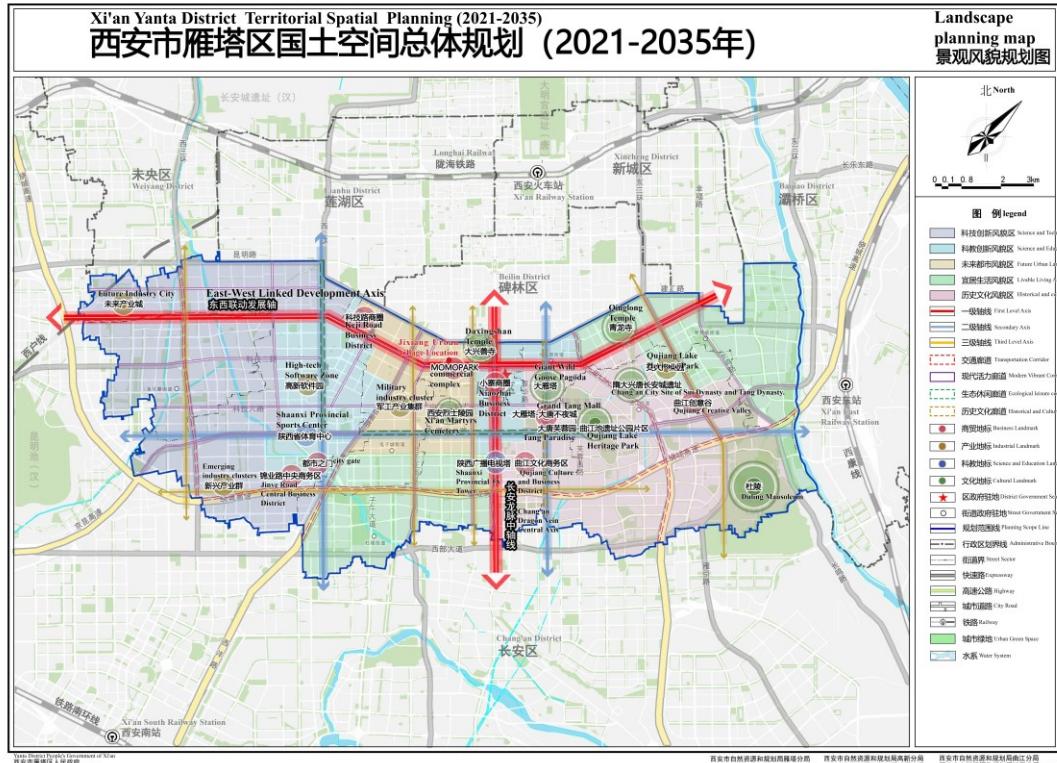
Two axes	
Ancient Capital Cultural Axis	Relying on Chang'an Road, it connects Daxingshan Temple, Xiaozhai, Dongbali, Shaanxi Radio and Television Tower, Qujiang Cultural Business District, Overseas Chinese Town and other historical, commercial and cultural resources from north to south.
East-West Linked Development Axis	From east to west, it connects historical resources such as Qinglong Temple, Big Wild Goose Pagoda, Xiaozhai, MOMOPARK, Keji Road Business District, and Future Industrial City with important commercial and landscape nodes in the city.
District Five	
Science and Technology Innovation Area	The project primarily encompasses the Future Industrial City and Silk Road Software City areas, creating a digital industrial zone led by intelligent technology and integrating production, living, and ecology. This area primarily houses the software and information industry, with the

	<p>predominantly modern architectural style meeting functional requirements. Architectural combinations can utilize layout techniques such as symmetrical axes to meet urban design requirements while also integrating with the natural environment.</p>
Future Urban Landscape Area	<p>Relying on the ruins of the Tang Dynasty city wall, the area highlights the unique pattern of urban living clusters organized around green spaces, creating a continuous, open interface for shared communication and highlighting a cultural atmosphere that blends modernity with history. The predominant architectural style within the area is modern and minimalist, embodying a modern urban atmosphere that is fashionable, open, simple, diverse, and ecological. Architectural forms should vary in height, scale, and advancements, creating a rich urban skyline.</p>
Science, Education and Innovation Area	<p>The Xiaozhai and High-Tech Business Districts will be the core areas of the city, focusing on developing them into a showcase of international character, incorporating historical and cultural characteristics. High- and medium-high-intensity development will be the primary focus, highlighting the charm of a modern metropolis. The area will primarily serve commercial, trade, and office functions, with a predominantly modern, minimalist architectural style embodying vitality and a humanistic character.</p>
Historical and cultural area	<p>Drawing on numerous historical and cultural landmarks, such as the Big Wild Goose Pagoda, Qujiang Pond Ruins Park, and Duling Mausoleum, a national-level cultural tourism district will be created, showcasing the charm of Xi'an's ancient capital. This district will primarily serve the development of commerce and trade, while also preserving historical and cultural heritage. The architectural style should reflect the history and culture of adjacent historical and cultural districts while embodying modern architectural standards. Modern materials and expression methods should be employed to embody the unique character and charm of the Tang Dynasty.</p>
Livable living area	<p>With green networks and parks as the framework for public spaces, connecting parks, squares, cultural areas, and leisure spaces, this project</p>

	<p>aims to create an ecological residential space that interweaves blue and green, is open and shared, and vibrant and diverse. The area primarily serves residential and leisure functions, with a predominantly modern, minimalist architectural style that reflects vitality and livability. Buildings should vary in height, size, and depth, shaping a diverse urban skyline. Modern building materials will be predominant, with exterior facades clad in environmentally friendly paint or stone veneer.</p>
Multiple Points	
<p>Combining the existing historical resources, public spaces and important functional areas, six key control areas are created, namely the Muta Temple style control area, the Tang City Wall Ruins style control area, the Xiaozhai Business District style control area, the Qujiang Pool Ruins Park style control area, the Qinglong Temple style control area and the Duling style control area, highlighting the city's style and characteristics.</p>	

Source: territorial spatial planning.

Figure 44. Landscape planning map.



Source: territorial spatial planning

•***Yanta district landscape planning policy ——Guidance to Jixiang Village.***

According to Yanta District's urban design, Jixiang Village is located in a future urban landscape area. The requirements call for it to be built around the site of the Tang Dynasty city wall, highlighting the layout of urban living clusters arranged around green spaces. This will create a continuous, open, shared interface for communication, and highlight a cultural atmosphere that blends modernity with history. The predominant architectural style within the area is modern and minimalist, embodying a modern urban atmosphere characterized by fashion, openness, simplicity, diversity, and ecology. The architectural forms should vary in height, scale, and depth, creating a rich urban skyline. The adjacent industrial landmark is the commercial landmark, Momo Park.

The higher-level planning has already highlighted the key points of the entire area, highlighting a cultural atmosphere that blends modernity and history. The architecture is also diverse, shaping the city's rich skyline. Ecological considerations must also be taken into account.

### **10.3 Yanta district industrial layout planning.**

•***Yanta district industrial layout planning policy.***

One axis, one belt, three cores and multiple sectors.

*Figure 45. Yanta District Industrial Planning Policy*

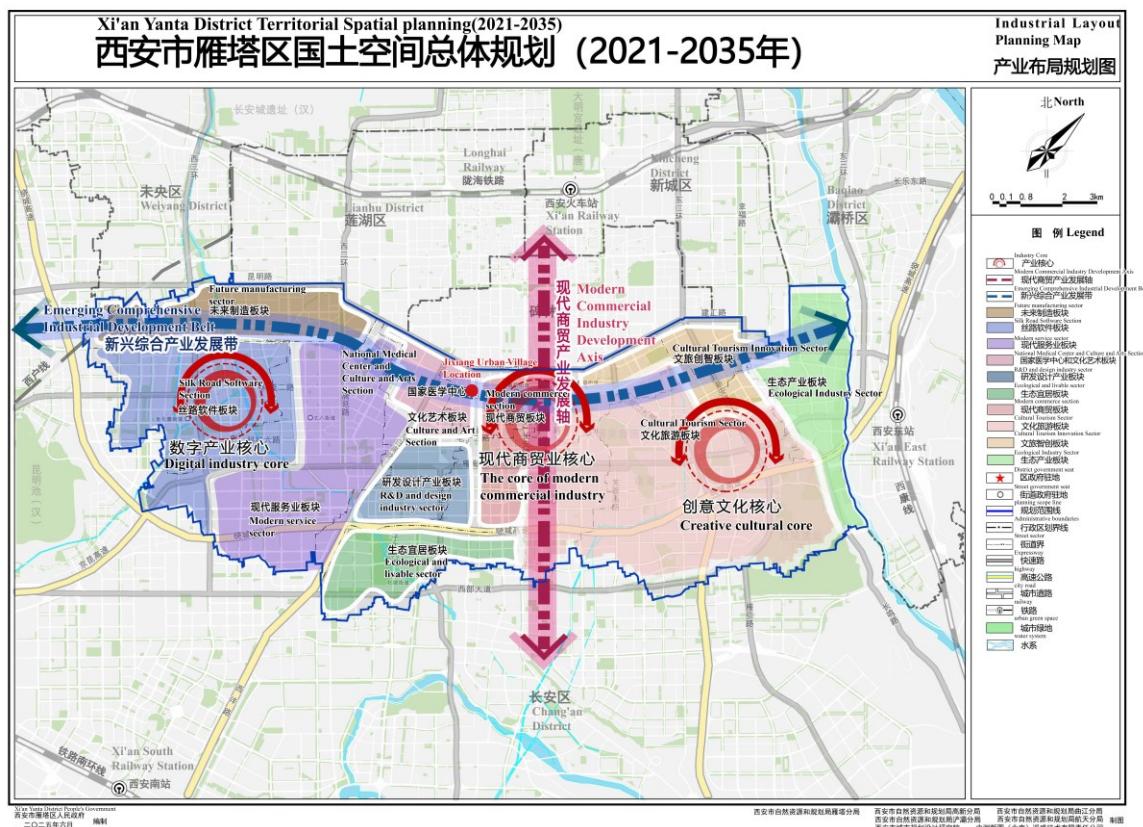
one axis	This is the modern commercial and trade industry development axis. Highlighting Chang'an South Road's strategic position as Xi'an's central urban axis, it integrates cultural, tourism, commercial, financial, and office resources, vigorously develops modern financial, business, and other service industries, builds a
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	modern urban RBD recreational and business district, and establishes Xi'an's modern service industry development axis.
one belt	This emerging comprehensive industrial development zone, centered around Xiaozhai East-West Road and extending east to Xiying Road and west to Keji Road, leverages new internet technologies such as big data and cloud computing to precisely match evolving consumer trends, accelerate the development of new digital retail formats such as livestreaming e-commerce and unmanned vending, and foster the formation of a new commercial development zone that deeply integrates traditional commerce with new retail, fostering diversified online and offline interactions.
three cores	
Digital industry core	Relying on the future manufacturing industry sector and the Silk Road Software City sector
The core of modern commerce and trade	Relying on the National Medical Center, cultural and art industry sector, modern commerce industry sector, and modern service industry sector
Creative Culture Core	Relying on the cultural tourism and creative industry sectors, cultural tourism sectors, and ecological tourism and conference sectors
multiple sectors	
Future manufacturing sector	Refers to the Yanta Future Industrial City as the core
National Medical Center and Cultural Arts Section	With resources such as the First Affiliated Hospital of Jiaotong University and Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts as the core
Modern commerce section	Taking Xiaozhai business district as the leader
Cultural Tourism Innovation Sector	Relying on resources such as Jiaotong University Science Park and Qinglong Temple

R&D and design industry sector	Taking Xijing Industrial Park as the carrier
Ecological and livable sector	Develop modern elderly care services and medical and health industries with Yannan Park as the core
Modern service sector	Focusing on high-tech Tangyan Road technology financial services, business and trade offices, and innovation incubation
Silk Road Software City Section	Taking high-tech "industrial digitalization" as the core
Cultural tourism sector	With Big Wild Goose Pagoda-Tang Dynasty City as the core
Ecological industry sector	Relying on Chanba's foreign trade functions, corporate headquarters and other projects

Source: Territorial spatial planning

Figure 46. Industrial layout planning map.



Source: territorial spatial planning.

•***Yanta district industrial layout planning policy——Guidance to Jixiang Village.***

Based on the guidance provided by higher-level planning for Jixiang Village, it can be concluded that Jixiang Village is located in the National Medical Center and cultural sectors, bordering the modern commercial sector, and situated within an emerging industrial development zone. Consideration could be given to developing a cultural sector leveraging resources such as the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts to foster the development of a new commercial development zone that deeply integrates traditional commerce with new retail, fostering diversified online and offline interactions.

**10.4 The overall positioning of all policies on Jixiang Village.**

Based on the Yanta District's superior planning, the planning policies for Jixiang Village can be summarized into four points. These include positioning and specific requirements for architectural form. Therefore, constructive suggestions have been made for the development and renovation of Jixiang Village.

•***Cultural and artistic areas.***

Jixiang Village is located in an area whose development plan calls for it to be a cultural and artistic district. Coincidentally, Jixiang Village is located adjacent to the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts. This presents a potential opportunity for artistic and cultural space design in Jixiang Village, providing a venue for students from the academy to showcase their design skills. This could potentially attract tourists and enhance the city's aesthetic appeal.

•***New business.***

Jixiang Village is located in an emerging industrial development zone. Based on government policies, it can develop a new business experience model that deeply integrates

traditional commerce with new retail, fostering a diversified online and offline interactive experience.

Most of the surrounding businesses are shopping malls, enclosed spaces for shopping, entertainment, and dining. Jixiang Village, as an open-air venue, has a fundamentally different architectural style from large shopping malls, allowing it to develop its own unique business model.

**•*Architectural form requirements.***

According to higher-level planning requirements, architectural forms should vary in height, size, and advancements, creating a diverse urban skyline. However, most urban landscapes are monotonous, making it difficult for them to develop a unique character. The unique architectural forms of urban villages can be considered valuable, enriching the city's architectural landscape.

**•*Urban atmosphere requirements.***

The higher-level planning also sets requirements for the urban atmosphere of the Jixiang Village area, emphasizing modern simplicity and expressing a trendy, open, simple, diverse, and ecologically friendly modern urban atmosphere.

Jixiang Village is located near a large number of universities, has a young and vibrant population, and is a mixed commercial and residential area. This plan allows for the creation of a unique urban atmosphere.

## Part VI. Jixiang Village analysis——Village Level

### Chapter11. First impression of Jixiang Village

Jixiang Village is located in a prosperous area in the southern suburbs of Xi'an, backed by the South Second Ring Road to the north, and extends inward along the intersection of Xiaozhai West Road and the southern section of Hanguang Road. Nearby are well-known landmarks such as the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts. At the same time, Metro Line 3 has a station at its intersection, and transportation is very convenient (Liu, P, 2018).

Figure 47. The distribution of urban villages within the Third Ring Road of Xi'an.



Designed by author.

The west of Jixiang Village is close to the Gaoxin Zone, which is a high-density office area. There are dozens of business districts including Xiaozhai and CapitaLand Plaza, as well as several schools and hospitals nearby. It can be seen that Jixiang Village is indeed located in

the core area of the city, and the surrounding supporting service facilities are also very complete.

Jixiang Village was originally named "Jijia Village", which came from the family with the surname Ji who originally lived in the village. During the war in the Qing Dynasty, the villagers changed the name of Jijia Village to "Jixiang Fort" and later to "Jixiang Village" in order to maintain peace and stability in the village (Liu, P, 2018).

Figure 48. Satellite image of Jixiang Village.



Designed by author.

From the satellite image of Jixiang Village, it is obvious that the distribution of buildings in the urban village is completely different from the surrounding buildings. The buildings in the urban village are more densely packed and divided into smaller parts. Therefore, the spatial layout of Jixiang Village is unique in the city. Considering the diversified planning requirements of the city, the unique street and alley pattern of Jixiang Village can be preserved to distinguish it from other units in the city.

## 11.1 Site visit.

- *The gatehouse of Jixiang Village.*

The gatehouse is located at the entrance of the main lane of the village. It is a traditional Chinese brick and stone structure and was once the symbolic entrance of the village. After modern renovation, the exterior wall is paved with tiles, and the center of the gatehouse is marked with "Jixiang Village" in yellow relief font. An electronic running water light screen is added below to scroll the slogan. Historically, it served as a village defense and identity symbol. Today, it plays more of a cultural display and regional boundary marker role, integrating with the surrounding commercial streetscape.

The stone plaque on the gatehouse is a direct physical evidence of Jixiang Village's hundreds of years of history, recording the process of the village's development from an agricultural settlement to an "urban village". Despite the surrounding high-rise buildings, the gatehouse still retains its traditional style, becoming a typical landscape of the fusion of the old and the new, reflecting the persistence and adaptation of the urban village in urbanization.

*Figure 49. The Gatehouse of Jixiang Village.*



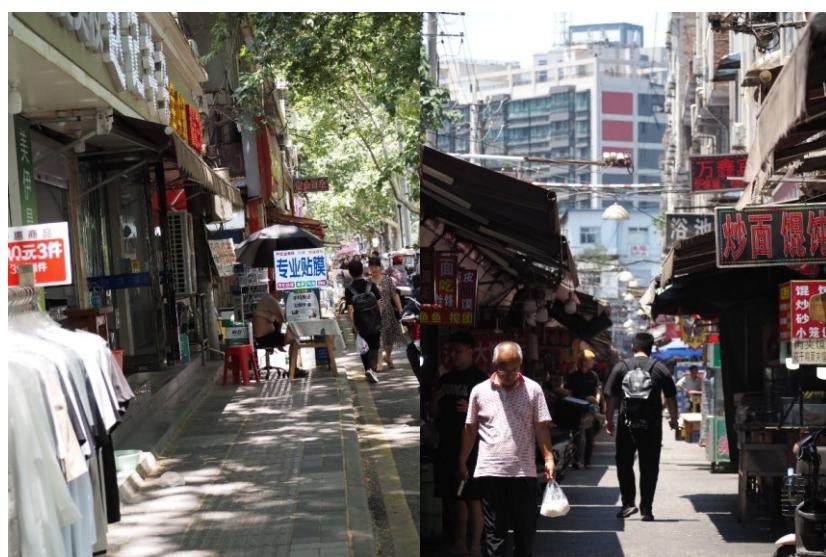
Designed by author.

•*Shops and vendors.*

As a typical "village in the city", Jixiang Village has a strong local characteristic and social significance in its commercial form. There are many kinds of vendors and shops in the village, including snack stalls, jewelry shops, barber shops, daily necessities stores and various life service points. These shops not only meet the daily needs of villagers and surrounding residents, but also attract a large number of young people and tourists, becoming a unique commercial cultural phenomenon in the region. Jixiang Village has active commercial activities, forming a micro-economic system known for its convenience and diversity, reflecting the flexible and grassroots economic characteristics of the village in the city.

The ground floors of the buildings in Jixiang Village are all vendors, and the villagers rent their houses to vendors doing business. There are two types of shops: street shops and village lane shops. The shops on the street are neat and large in area, with unified planning, while the shops in the lanes are not planned and small in area, and there are also mobile stalls.

*Figure 50. Shops in Jixiang Village.*



Designed by author

•*Billboard.*

As a visual representation of a typical urban village in Xi'an, the dense and mixed outdoor billboards in Jixiang Village constitute a unique "local text". Although these signs of different sizes, different materials and free forms lack unified planning and appear disordered, they vividly reflect the vigorous vitality and survival wisdom of the underlying business ecology with their original collage method. They grow wantonly against the facade of the "handshake building", intertwined with spider-web-like cables, forming a visual landscape with great tension and fireworks. This seemingly chaotic stacking is precisely the intuitive embodiment of the self-organizing ability of informal spaces in urban villages: from "shoe repair and key matching" to "spicy hot pot rice noodles", each simple or even rough sign is the most direct demand declaration and identity identification of small and micro businesses, and together weaves a market symbol system full of grassroots vitality and regional recognition, becoming an important visual entrance to understand the social structure and cultural texture of urban marginal communities.

*Figure 51. The billboard of Jixiang Village.*



Designed by author.

•***Building façade.***

The facades of the buildings in Jixiang Village present a typical "collage-style" landscape shaped by high-density self-built behavior. Its core features are the extreme superposition in the vertical direction and the wanton encroachment in the horizontal direction: the original multi-layer brick-concrete structure constitutes the base, and the exterior walls mostly retain rough gray cement plastering or partially exposed red bricks, while the later added floors generally use cheap blue color steel plates or simple brick walls, forming a distinct material and color fault. The facades of these "handshake buildings" rarely retain the complete original outline. Iron sheds, cantilevered balconies, and metal anti-theft nets are attached to the main body like parasitic structures, layer by layer protruding outwards and squeezing the lane space. The functions of the facades are highly mixed - the bottom floor is the rolling shutter of the shop and advertising spaces of different sizes; the middle floor is densely covered with anti-theft fences and air-conditioning outdoor units, and the wires entangled in them hang like vines; the top floor is mostly seen with clothes drying, satellite antennas, and plastic sheets and asbestos tiles used for waterproofing or extension. This unplanned proliferation not only exposes the temporary nature of building materials and traces of repair (such as iron hoops reinforcing cracked walls and replaced window frames of different colors), but also deeply reflects the self-organizing logic of residents in the urban village ecology where land is extremely scarce, maximizing the use of limited space based on survival needs. The facade itself is a key material text for understanding the formation mechanism of informal residential space and daily life strategies.

Figure 52. Building façade.



Designed by author.

•**Public area.**

The lack of public space in Jixiang Village is the most significant phenomenon of spatial deprivation in its high-density urban village texture. Driven by the maximization of land benefits, the wanton expansion of self-built houses has devoured the public land that should have been reserved, resulting in a lack of formal public space carriers such as parks, squares, and community activity centers in the area. Residents' daily public life is squeezed into a lane system that is overloaded with both physics and functions: the narrow passages are reduced to "a narrow sky"-style oppressive corridors due to the window sills of the "handshake buildings" on both sides and the overlapping shielding of anti-theft nets, which inherently do not have the scale conditions to accommodate collective activities. The limited lane space is continuously occupied by shops occupying the road, motorcycle parking, mobile

vendors, and piles of sundries on the ground floor. The traffic function is still blocked, let alone assuming public functions such as socializing, leisure, or cultural ceremonies.

Residents are forced to use their private spaces to make up for the lack of public space. The security nets have become drying areas, the windowsills have been used as flower racks, the clotheslines stretched across the alleys have encroached on public airspace, and the old sofas or plastic stools that appear sporadically in the corners are actually helpless substitutes for the absence of public resting spaces. This extremely squeezed physical environment not only deprives residents of their right to sunlight, ventilation, and activities, but also leads to social problems such as weakened community identity, disappearance of children's play space, and social isolation of the elderly due to the lack of safe and open gathering places. This deeply exposes the structural imbalance in the allocation of public resources and the lack of spatial justice in the process of informal urbanization.

## **11.2 Questionnaire and its results.**

After conducting an on-site survey of Jixiang Village, a questionnaire survey was conducted to understand the views and opinions of different groups living in the urban village regarding its redevelopment. The survey was conducted online and consisted of fifteen questions. The survey collected basic information such as the residents' identity, age, and education level, and then asked them about their views on Jixiang Village and their ideas for its future redevelopment.

The questionnaire was distributed in the Jixiang Village group, which includes villagers, migrant workers, and other relevant personnel. The questionnaire was also distributed in other groups to conduct the survey.

Figure 53. Jixiang Village Online Questionnaire.

**Top Screenshot: Survey Results**

**Question 1: Your Identity**

选项	小计	比例
原住民 (有村集体户口)	37	52.11%
长期租户 (租住一年以上)	7	9.86%
短期租户 (租住一年以下)	3	4.23%
商户或经营者	2	2.82%
其他	22	30.99%
本题有效填写人次	71	

**Question 2: Age**

选项	小计	比例
18岁以下	1	1.41%
18-30岁	24	33.8%
31-50岁	33	46.48%
51岁以上	13	18.31%
本题有效填写人次	71	

**Bottom Screenshot: Answer Sheets and Group Chat Settings**

**Answer Sheets**

View all answer sheets 16:03 4G 4G

来自IP	1. 您的身份	2. 年龄段	3. 学历
陕西宝鸡	原住民 (有村集体户口)	18-30岁	大学
陕西咸阳	原住民 (有村集体户口)	51岁以上	高中
陕西咸阳	其他	18-30岁	大学
陕西西安	其他	18-30岁	大学
北京北京	原住民 (有村集体户口)	31-50岁	研究生
河南焦作	其他	31-50岁	大学
陕西咸阳	原住民 (有村集体户口)	18-30岁	大学
陕西咸阳	原住民 (有村集体户口)	51岁以上	大学
陕西咸阳	原住民 (有村集体户口)	18-30岁	大学
陕西咸阳	原住民 (有村集体户口)	31-50岁	初中

共 71 条 << < 1/8 > >> 每页显示 10 条记录

[AI智能清洗答卷](#) [筛选重复选择同一答案](#)

**Group Chat Settings**

群聊设置 16:05 4G 4G

吉祥村 >  
别把一个人的在乎当成理所当然。你...  
Jixiang Urban village group.

**群聊成员**

初遇	殷无所属	情乱...	一念之...	大海
旧时...	摄影师...	♂尔沉沦	孤独的...	A.Man
一不...	熊猫...	安稳度...	蓝书笙、	邀请

**群聊信息**

群聊名称: 吉祥村  
群号和二维码: 778996626  
群公告: 未设置  
我的本群昵称: 未设置  
群聊备注: 未设置

**群应用中心**

文件 相册 指南功能

Figure 54. Jixiang Village questionnaire survey and results

## Jixiang Village Questionnaire Survey and Results(70 people)

### 1. Your identity

Aboriginal (with village collective household registration) 37 (52.86%)  
 Long-term tenant (renting for more than one year) 7 (10%)  
 Short-term tenant (renting for less than one year) 3 (4.29%)  
 Merchant or operator 2 (2.86%)  
 Other 21 (30%)

### 2. Age range

Under 18 years old 1 (1.43%)  
 18-30 years old 23 (2.86%)  
 31-50 years old 33 (47.14%)  
 Over 51 years old 13 (18.75%)

### 3. Education

Primary school 0 (0%)  
 Junior high school 13 (18.57%)  
 Senior high school 12 (17.14%)  
 University 33 (47.14%)  
 postgraduate 10 (14.29%)  
 PhD 2 (2.86%)

### 4. Housing type

Self-built house 42 (60%)  
 Rental house 23 (32.86%)  
 Shared rental house 5 (7.14%)

### 5. Your occupation type

Student 13 (18.57%)  
 Freelancer 10 (14.29%)  
 Small trader 3 (4.29%)  
 Civil servant/public institution 2 (2.86%)  
 Corporate employee 20 (28.57%)  
 Retired/unemployed 12 (17.14%)  
 Other 10 (14.29%)

### 6. Do you think the urban villages are safe?

Good 28 (40%)  
 Average 35 (50%)  
 Poor 7 (10%)

### 7. Have you ever encountered any fire safety hazards?

Yes 28 (40%)  
 No 42 (60%)

### 8. Do you think there are hidden dangers in traffic safety?

Yes 47 (67.14%)  
 No 23 (32.86%)

### 9. Do you communicate/interact with your neighbors often?

Often 21 (30%)  
 Occasionally 34 (48.57%)  
 Hardly ever 15 (21.43%)

### 10. Have you ever participated in activities organized by the village?

Often 8 (11.43%)  
 Rarely 42 (60%)  
 Never 20 (28.57%)

### 11. What do you think is the most valuable/most worth preserving thing about the urban village (multiple choice question)

Street pattern 25 (35.71%)  
 Cheap rent 23 (32.86%)  
 Community and neighborhood relations 27 (38.57%)  
 Convenience of life (snacks, shops) 38 (54.29%)  
 Culture/memories 40 (57.14%)  
 No special value 5 (7.14%)  
 Other 4 (5.71%)

### 12. Do you support the transformation of Jixiang Village?

Yes 39 (55.71%)  
 No 9 (12.86%)  
 Depends on the plan 22 (31.43%)

### 13. Do you think that the urban village has preservation value?

Yes, special urban context 40 (57.14%)  
 No, dirty and messy 20 (28.57%)  
 Other 10 (14.29%)

### 14. What kind of renovation method do you prefer?

Demolition and reconstruction 13 (18.57%)  
 Partial renovation 11 (15.71%)  
 Function optimization (such as transportation, greening) 43 (61.43%)  
 Exterior facade renovation 3 (4.29%)

### 15. You prefer to

demolish, move upstairs 17 (24.29%)  
 renovate on the original site 53 (75.71%)

According to the results of the questionnaire, it can be seen that most people think that the urban village is worth preserving and hope to renovate it on the original site. Only a small number of people want to completely demolish it and move into buildings.

People think that the most valuable thing to preserve in the urban village is the culture of the urban village itself and some memories; then the convenience of life in the urban village, such as the superiority of the location, in the city center, and convenient commuting. Then there is the emotion between neighbors. The emotional density between rural people is higher than that of urban people, and it is more humane. Then the special architectural style and cheap rent are all aspects that people think are valuable in the urban village.

And people think that the most needed transformation is transportation and the lack of public activity space.

## Chapter12. Preliminary Case Analysis

The analysis of Jixiang Village is conducted at two scales: a larger scale analysis and an analysis focusing on the urban village. The two scales provide a more comprehensive understanding of the urban village. The large-scale analysis of the functional zoning around the urban village, such as the distribution of universities, hospitals and scenic spots, can position the transformation of the urban village. The analysis of the urban village itself can be used to transform the urban village in a more detailed manner, such as road transformation and facade transformation.

### 12.1 Large scale analysis.

#### •*The six urban districts and the third ring road of Xi'an.*

The “six urban districts” of Xi'an refer to the traditional central urban area, including:  
 Beilin District: The core of the old city, covering the bell tower, city walls and major cultural and educational areas.

Xin Cheng District: railway station, provincial government seat, political and transportation hub.

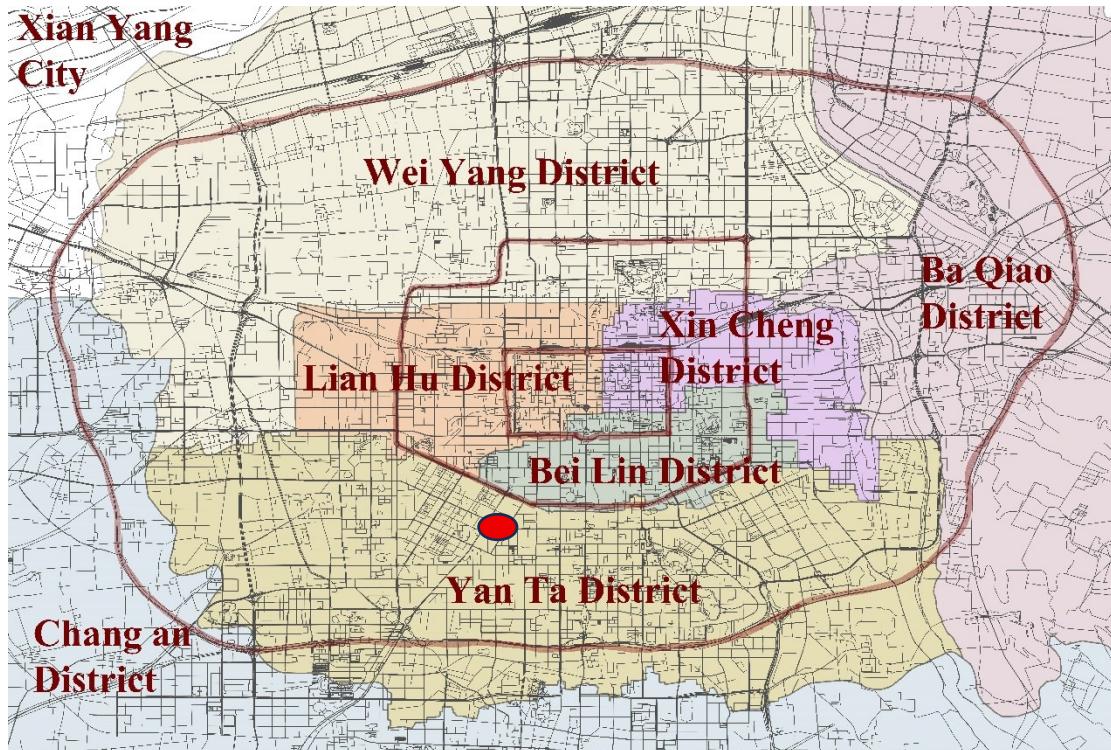
Lianhu District: Muslim Street and large wholesale market concentration area, with both historical and commercial functions.

Yanta District: Colleges and universities (such as Xi'an Jiaotong University), high-tech industries (High-tech Zone) and the Big Wild Goose Pagoda scenic area, it has outstanding economic vitality.

Baqiao District: Eastern Ecological Zone, including Chanba Wetland Park and International Port Area (starting point of China-Europe Express).

Weiyang District: The northern gateway, covering Xi'an North Railway Station, Economic Development Zone, and extending to parts of Xixian New District.

*Figure 55. The six urban districts and the third ring road of Xi'an.*



Designed by author

The First Ring Road (Xi'an "Old City Wall Loop") is close to the ancient city wall of Xi'an and surrounds the core area within the city wall. The first ring is the cultural core area: including historical sites such as the Bell Tower, Drum Tower, Forest of Steles, and the Great Mosque. The road is narrow, traffic is dense, people and vehicles are mixed, and there are many small vendors. Tourists are concentrated in the area, and slow traffic is given priority.

The Second Ring Road (the main urban road ring) goes around the outside of the ancient city and covers most of the main urban area. As the main commuting route, a large number of public and private cars pass through. The supporting facilities within the Second Ring Road are very mature: schools, hospitals, and residential areas are densely populated.

The traffic pressure is very high, and traffic jams often occur during peak hours in the morning and evening.

Jixiang Village is located in the southern part of the inner side of the Second Ring Road, near Yanta West Road and Xiao zhai.

The Third Ring Road (urban expressway, bypass road) is a system of expressways outside the city, connecting the urban area with the suburbs. It has ramps connecting the main exits of the city (such as the Airport Expressway and Xi bao Expressway), which have alleviated the traffic congestion problem in the city center to a certain extent.

***•Analysis of scenic spots around Jixiang village.***

Jixiang Village is located in Yanta District, on the edge of the Second Ring Road, with convenient transportation. It is close to the scenic spot. Analyze it from four directions:

Cultural and historical attractions (southeast, about 1–3 km)

- Shaanxi History Museum: 10–15 minutes walk, a typical museum landmark.
- Big Wild Goose Pagoda + North Square Music Fountain: about 2 km, the night view and fountain attract a large number of tourists.
- Tang Paradise & Tang Everbright City: about 3 km, with a strong Tang culture and night tour atmosphere

By analyzing the tourist attractions surrounding Jixiang Village, we can understand the future direction of its transformation, how to attract tourists, and how to avoid excessive overlap between Jixiang Village's tourism nature and that of other tourist attractions, thus creating a unique tourism IP for Jixiang Village. Furthermore, the distance of popular attractions from Jixiang Village indicates the ease with which tourists can reach the village.

Figure 56. Distribution map of scenic spots around Jixiang Village.



Designed by author

University Cultural District (northwest, 500m–2km)

- Northwestern Polytechnical University Friendship Campus: adjacent to the west, a key location for technological research.

- Xi'an Jiao tong University Xing qing Campus (School of Medicine): within about 1km, with multiple entrances and exits open to the public
- Shaanxi Art Museum, Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts Gallery/Ming hu: close to the subway station, within walking distance

Commercial and entertainment district (within 500m around the subway station)

- MOMOPARK / CapitaLand / Vivo City / Wanda Plaza: concentrated commercial district with complete facilities.

- Public squares/temples such as Zhu que Square, Xi jing Hotel Conference Hall, and Da xing shan Temple: both cultural and leisure purposes.

•***Xi'an metro distribution.***

As of the end of December 2024, Xi'an Metro has opened 12 lines with a total mileage of about 403 kilometers, ranking 10th in the country (2025, Li). A relatively complete "radial + circular" rail transit network has been formed, covering the main urban area, suburbs and airport area.

*Figure 57. Xi'an subway map.*



source: <https://map.xidian.cc/htmls/subway.html>

Jixiang Village is very conveniently located, with a subway station, "Jixiang Village Station," located nearby, making it easy to reach the village.

Figure 58. Introduction to Xi'an Metro Lines.

Line number	Starting and ending directions	Main areas/sites
Line 1	Houweizhai ↔ Fengcheng 5th Road	East-west direction, running through the city center (including Tonghua Gate and Xiaozhai)
Line2	North Railway Station ↔ Huizhan Center	The north-south main line passes through the Bell Tower, Xiaozhai, and Dayan Pagoda
Line3	Yuhuazhai ↔ Bonded Area	Running from east to west and slightly north, connecting Gaoxin, Qujiang
Line4	North Railway Station ↔ Xi'an Aerospace City	The North-South Express Line covers Daming Palace, Qujiang, and the Aerospace Base
Line5	Innovation Port ↔ Xixian Park	East-west new district line, serving Xixian New District
Line6	Northwest University ↔ East Lake Park	It runs through the old city from north to south, passing by Jixiang Village and Textile City
Line 7	Around the city center	Xi'an's first fully underground ring line connects major hubs in the main urban area
Line8	Xixian New District ↔ Qujiang	North-south orientation, serving the cultural tourism area and Xixian New District
Line9	North Railway Station ↔ Lintong (Qinling Mausoleum)	Connecting to Lintong Tourist Area (Terracotta Warriors) to the east
Line10	North Railway Station ↔ Xingzhezhai	Northern commuter line, serving the airport area
Line14	Xi'an North Railway Station ↔ Xianyang Airport	Connects North Railway Station and Xi'an Xianyang International Airport
Line16	Innovation Port ↔ Qinhan New Town	Xixian New District regional line, western science and education commuter line

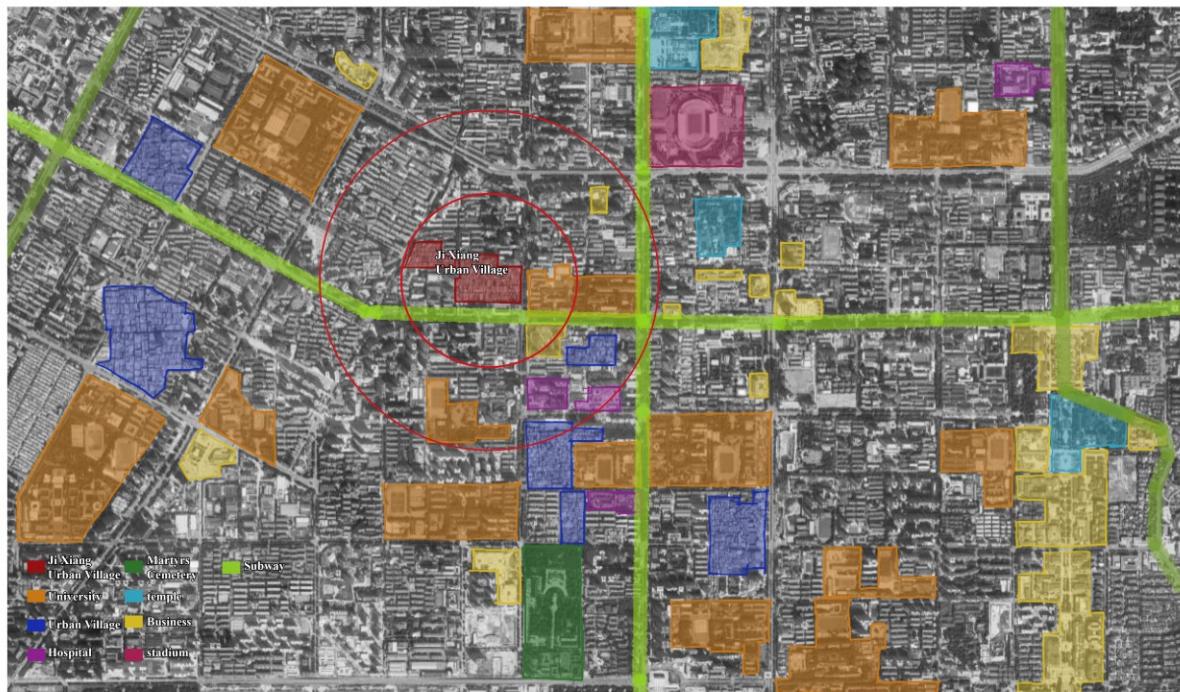
Source: <https://map.xidian.cc/htmls/subway.html>

•**Functional analysis map of Jixiang village surrounding area.**

Jixiang Village belongs to Xiao zhai Road Subdistrict, Yanta District, Xi'an City. It is adjacent to Jixiang Road in the south and the southern section of Hanguang Road in Yanta District in the east. It is close to Xiao zhai Business District, the largest business district in the southern suburbs of Xi'an, and momo park shopping mall. There are many well-known landmarks around Jixiang Village, such as Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts, Xi'an Chemical

Reagent Field, 212 Institutes, Xi'an Jiao tong University Medical College, Provincial Party School, Xi'an Academy of Social Sciences, etc (Zhang, 2024).

*Figure 59. Functional analysis map of Jixiang Village surrounding area.*



Designed by author.

Analyzing the area surrounding Jixiang Village reveals the demographics of its inhabitants, and future renovations of Jixiang Village must consider the needs of this population. The map shows a high concentration of schools, indicating a large young population. Therefore, it's crucial to determine whether a portion of Jixiang Village's space can adequately meet the needs of this demographic.

## 12.2 Focus on Jixiang village.

### •**Building status.**

There are 737 existing buildings in Jixiang Village, with a building density of about 0.86. The building density is relatively high. There is no public leisure area in the village, and

everything except the roads is covered by buildings. Most of the original buildings are 1-2-story residential buildings, and more than 90% of the buildings are mainly brick-concrete structures with poor building foundations. With the influx of a large number of migrant workers, the villagers of Jixiang Village began to add to the original buildings, and most of the buildings have been added more than 3 times, and the number of floors has even reached 9. The lowest building in Jixiang Village is 4 floors, and the highest is 11 floors. Some of the buildings rebuilt on the original site are also mainly for expanding the accommodation area, and most of them are tall, wide and large rectangular buildings. At present, the volume ratio of Jixiang Village has reached 4.7 (Gu, 2022).

Population status: According to statistics, the total population of Jixiang Village is 1,735, with 1,599 agricultural population, totaling more than 300 households. The floating population is more than 20,000, which is about 12 times the total population of Jixiang Village (Gu, 2022).

Figure 60. Satellite image of Jixiang Village



Designed by author

The construction land area of Jixiang Village is 19.5 hectares, and the number of floors of the buildings is mostly 4-6 floors; the building density is 0.65; the plot ratio is 3.2; there are 550 households, totaling 1,243 people (Zhang, 2024).

•*Jixiang village road analysis.*

The main streets of Jixiang Village are 5 meters wide at their widest point and 4 meters wide at their narrowest. There is almost no greenery along the streets, and the surface is paved with cement. Jixiang Village's streets are connected to the city's main roads on all four sides, resulting in high accessibility and convenient transportation.

Figure 61. Jixiang Village Road Map.

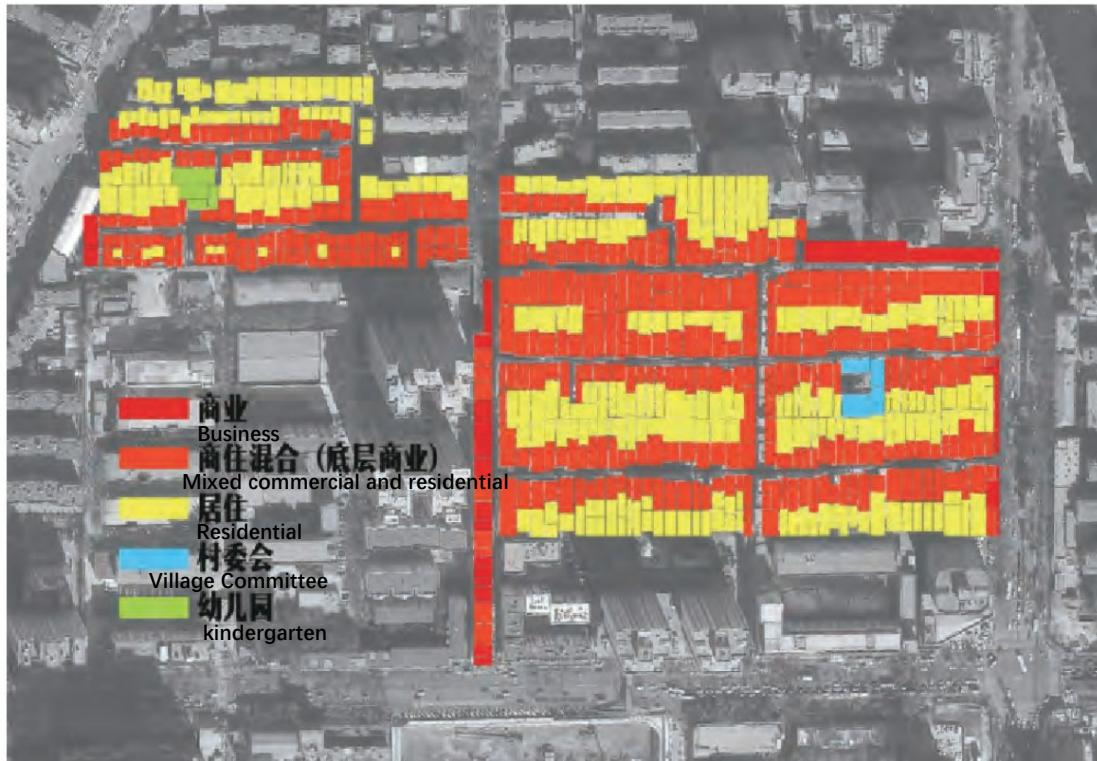


Designed by author.

The architectural layout of Jixiang Village reveals that all buildings facing the street are commercial. Almost all buildings are for commercial and residential use, along with a kindergarten and the village committee office. There are no other architectural functions, such

as public spaces. The entire village is very crowded, with almost no additional public space for residents' leisure and recreation.

Figure 62. Building function distribution map.



Source: Liu, P. P., & Ni, S. H., & Wei, Q. L. (2018).

## Part VII Case Study Design result-Jixiang Urban Village, Xi'an

### Chapter 13. Renovation Jixiang Village: Renovation Under the Guidance of Superior Planning

Based on the guidance of higher-level planning for the Jixiang Village area, the design plan can be divided into four parts. These include the core positioning of Jixiang Village, which maintains the existing mixed-use commercial and residential areas while considering new business opportunities and infusing culture into the village. Furthermore, the village's environment needs to be considered, with minor renovations planned. Finally, a more fundamental consideration is whether ecological considerations can be incorporated.

#### 13.1 Overall planning concept of Jixiang village.

First, continuing the previous higher-level planning for the functions and positioning of the Jixiang Village area, there are four main aspects: cultural and artistic functions, new business models, architectural requirements, and urban atmosphere requirements. The specific requirements for each point are listed and then mapped to the corresponding spaces within Jixiang Village.

The Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts is right next to Jixiang Village, which has a good artistic atmosphere. We can consider how to incorporate more art and cultural elements into Jixiang Village.

While Jixiang Village is surrounded by large commercial areas, its business model is not designed to compete maliciously with these adjacent malls. Instead, it aims to foster mutual growth, as most of the nearby malls are chains with locations across the country, catering to diverse needs for dining, entertainment, and leisure. Jixiang Village's commerce,

however, is fundamentally different, preserving its authentic, traditional folk character. Being a village nestled within a large city inherently alters its nature. The higher-level planning has provided guidance for the architectural style and environment, which can then be implemented within Jixiang Village.

Figure 63. Overview of the planning and renovation of Jixiang Village.

	Cultural and Artistic Areas	New Business	Architectural Form Requirements	Urban Atmosphere Requirements
<b>Higher-level Planning Points</b>	Jixiang Village is <i>located</i> in an area whose development plan calls for it to be a <i>cultural and artistic district</i> .	Jixiang Village is <i>located</i> in an emerging <i>industrial development zone</i> .	According to higher-level planning requirements, <i>architectural forms</i> should vary in height, size, and advancements, creating a <i>diverse urban skyline</i> .	The higher-level planning also sets requirements for the <i>urban atmosphere</i> of the Jixiang Village area, <i>emphasizing modern simplicity</i> and expressing a <i>trendy, open, simple, diverse, and ecologically friendly</i> modern urban atmosphere.
<b>The Current Problems of Urban Villages</b>	There are almost <i>no cultural or artistic spaces available</i> , making it impossible to have any kind of cultural experience.	The <i>commercial</i> layout remains traditional, even more functionally <i>singular</i> than other commercial spaces: the <i>ground floor</i> is for <i>dining</i> , and the <i>upper floors</i> are for <i>living</i> . There are almost <i>no spaces for entertainment or leisure</i> .	The <i>architecture</i> of Jixiang Village is <i>unique</i> and distinct from other urban spaces. Its architectural style is quite <i>distinctive</i> .	The <i>street environment</i> in Jixiang Village is <i>poor</i> , but it also has its own unique characteristics.
<b>Advantages of Jixiang Village</b>	Located <i>next to Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts</i> , it has a <i>rich cultural</i> and artistic <i>atmosphere</i> .	Unlike other enclosed commercial spaces, Jixiang Village's commercial space allows it to develop a <i>unique business model—an open-air</i> , unreplicable business model.	The <i>buildings</i> vary in height and length, and are <i>not subject to unified planning</i> , giving them a wild beauty.	The <i>streets</i> , with their varying <i>elevations and colorful billboards</i> , create a beautiful scene.
<b>Point of Renovation</b>	The area will feature <i>cultural and artistic experiences</i> , combining art and culture with traditional folk customs and integrating them <i>into a real-world space</i> .	Develop <i>own brand</i> and create both <i>offline and online sales channels</i> . The offline business model can include a handcrafted approach. Create more <i>leisure and entertainment areas</i> to encourage people to spend more time there.	Minor renovations to the <i>building facade</i>	The street pattern of mixed pedestrian and non-motorized traffic will be transformed, and <i>environmental and ecological</i> issues will be taken into consideration when making <i>street renovations</i> .
<b>Planning Results</b>	Rooftop Theater – Qinqiang Opera Traditional Costume Experience Store Shadow Puppet Theater Fengxiang Clay Sculpture Entertainment Space Qin Embroidery Experience Space	Develop Jixiang Village's own brands, such as traditional clothing brands and embroidery brands. Create both offline and online sales channels. Offline, offer a business model where customers can experience hands-on crafting.  For entertainment and leisure, consider developing rooftop cafes and the nighttime economy.	A more harmonious and aesthetically pleasing architectural form	Sponge roads, soft separation of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles, green roofs

Designed by author.

Based on the requirements of the higher-level plan, four aspects requiring transformation were identified. Considering the current status, advantages, and disadvantages of each location, a summary was made of how future transformations are needed, and how to implement these transformations within the space of Jixiang Village.

The innovation of Jixiang Village's redevelopment lies in several aspects. First, it leverages its inherent characteristics, such as traditional culture, traditional snacks, and unique commercial spaces, using these as a cultural backdrop to create tangible spaces for these intangible cultural elements. Second, it considers new economic models, moving away from traditional ones and focusing on building Jixiang Village's own commercial brand. This not only provides employment opportunities for villagers but also establishes Jixiang Village's unique identity. Third, it considers the micro-renovation of Jixiang Village's buildings. Finally, and most innovatively, is the "sponge road" concept, where Jixiang Village's roads are designed with permeable surfaces, reflecting a commitment to environmentally friendly village development.

## Chapter 14. Detailed Design of Jixiang Village

### 14.1 Cultural and Art Experience Area.

Xi'an boasts a rich history, serving as the capital of thirteen dynasties and attracting numerous tourists. This provides ample opportunity to establish a cultural foundation within Jixiang Village. Furthermore, Xi'an lacks a village that seamlessly blends traditional culture with commerce. Jixiang Village is an excellent choice.

The streets of Jixiang Village are already lined with traditional snacks, so further planning for these areas is unnecessary. However, the village lacks cultural and recreational spaces—places where visitors can slow down and linger. Currently, most people simply eat and leave.

Therefore, based on the current cultural landscape of Xi'an and the existing conditions of Jixiang Village, it is proposed to set up an exhibition hall at the main entrance of the village, opening up the ground floor space of the buildings and connecting them to create an open space. This space can serve as a popular science area for Xi'an's history and culture, and could even be used as an art gallery to showcase the works of students from nearby art academies.

Then, further develop areas where visitors can experience local culture, such as shadow puppetry, Qin embroidery, and Tang and Han clothing. Concentrating these traditional cultural elements within Jixiang Village will be its unique calling card. This will attract a wider audience, moving beyond just locals dining there to include tourists. A rooftop garden will allow for the integration of cafes, dessert shops, and other leisure and entertainment spaces, encouraging people to linger longer.

Figure 64. Xi'an traditional folk customs.



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Compared to the past, when Jixiang Village lacked cultural elements and its spatial design was very simplistic—just ground-floor commercial space and upper-floor residential buildings—the current design not only features key design nodes on the floor plan but also improves the vertical space. For example, there are rooftop garden cafes and a rooftop

theater. The rooftop theater can also serve as another calling card for Jixiang Village, promoting Qin qiang opera.

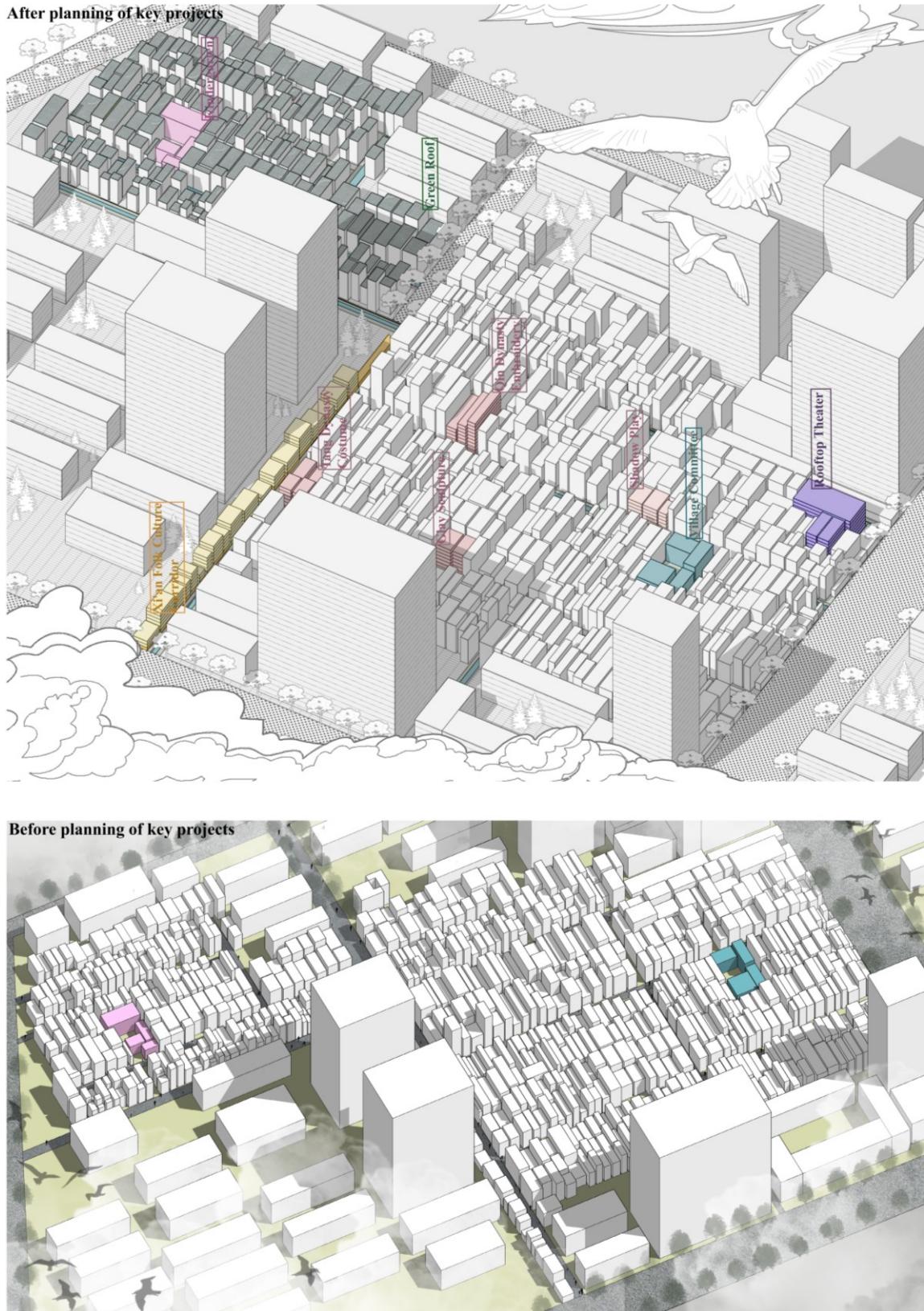
This map shows the industrial distribution of Jixiang Village before its redevelopment. The businesses were very evenly distributed, almost entirely consisting of snack shops, household goods stores, hardware stores, and hair salons. There were no spaces for distinctive cultural exchange or leisure and entertainment. Therefore, the people who came to the urban village were mainly local tenants and people who came to eat. Like other urban villages, Jixiang Village had a relatively bustling nighttime economy, so evenings were also a popular time for residents from the surrounding area to dine there.

*Figure 65. Jixiang Village Architectural Function Distribution Map.*



Source: Liu, P. P., & Ni, S. H., & Wei, Q. L. (2018).

Figure 66. Design drawings of key nodes in Jixiang Village



Designed by author.

Xi'an, the ancient capital of 13 dynasties, carries the rich cultural heritage and intangible folk customs of the Zhou, Qin, Han, and Tang dynasties. The renovation of Jixiang Village incorporates intangible cultural heritage elements such as Qinqiang opera and shadow puppetry into the streets and alleys, quietly promoting Shaanxi culture and attracting tourists. Culture and art can be showcased in the marketplace, not just in museums.

The cultural resources are very rich, and it depends on how to display the intangible culture in a tangible way. The picture below was taken in Jixiang Village. Combining with the local culture, it carefully shows what culture and activities can be considered for design in Jixiang Village.

•***Xi'an folk culture corridor (Ground floor multi-functional hall).***

*Figure 67. Location and function of Folk Cultural Corridor in Jixiang Village, Xi'an.*



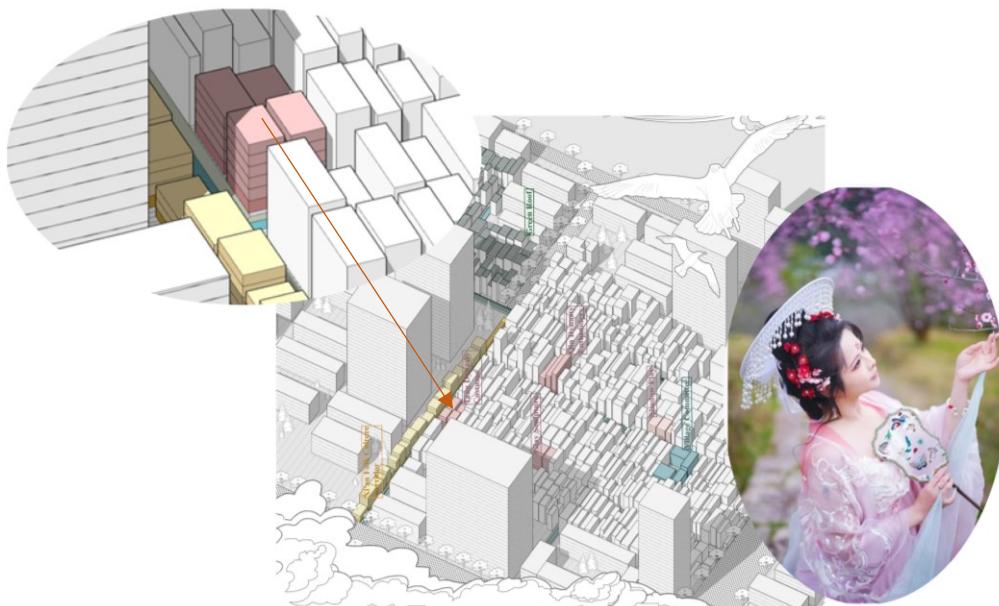
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At the entrance of Jixiang Village, marked by a gatehouse, the first floor of the yellow-area building was opened up to create a connected space. This space can be used to showcase Xi'an's traditional folk culture, serving as a cultural education exhibition hall. It can also be transformed for other purposes, such as becoming a flea market for regular events, or a space for art exhibitions by students from the Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts. This will attract diverse groups and ensure a steady flow of visitors to Jixiang Village, thereby boosting other industries.

This multi-functional hall can attract different people and age groups, truly achieving a diverse and inclusive space. Such spaces are currently rare in Xi'an's Yanta District; there are almost no similar spaces, thus attracting a regular clientele to Jixiang Village.

•**Tang dynasty costume.**

*Figure 68. The location of the Tang suit shop in Jixiang Village.*

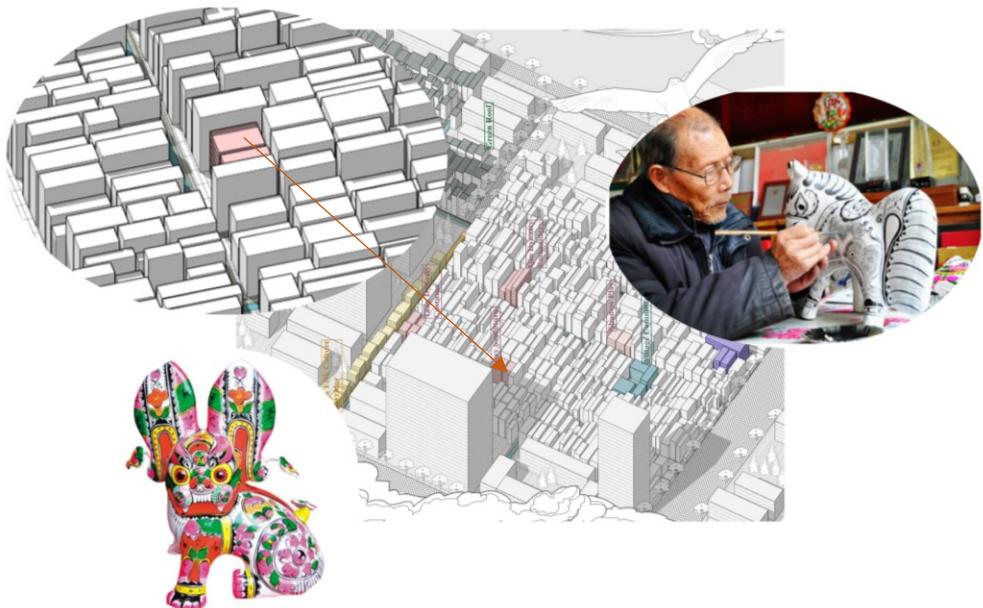


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Xi'an, as an ancient capital, boasts a long history and rich culture, with the glorious Tang Dynasty being an undeniable part of its history. In recent years, with the resurgence of traditional clothing, many people wear traditional attire for photo opportunities in the city. The opening of a Tang Dynasty costume shop in Jixiang Village not only includes makeup and styling but also clothing design, enhancing its unique brand identity and creating more employment opportunities—a win-win situation for the villagers. It will attract tourists to get their costumes done and then casually stroll around Jixiang Village.

**•*Feng Xiang* Clay sculpture.**

*Figure 69. Location of Feng Xiang clay sculptures in Jixiang Village.*

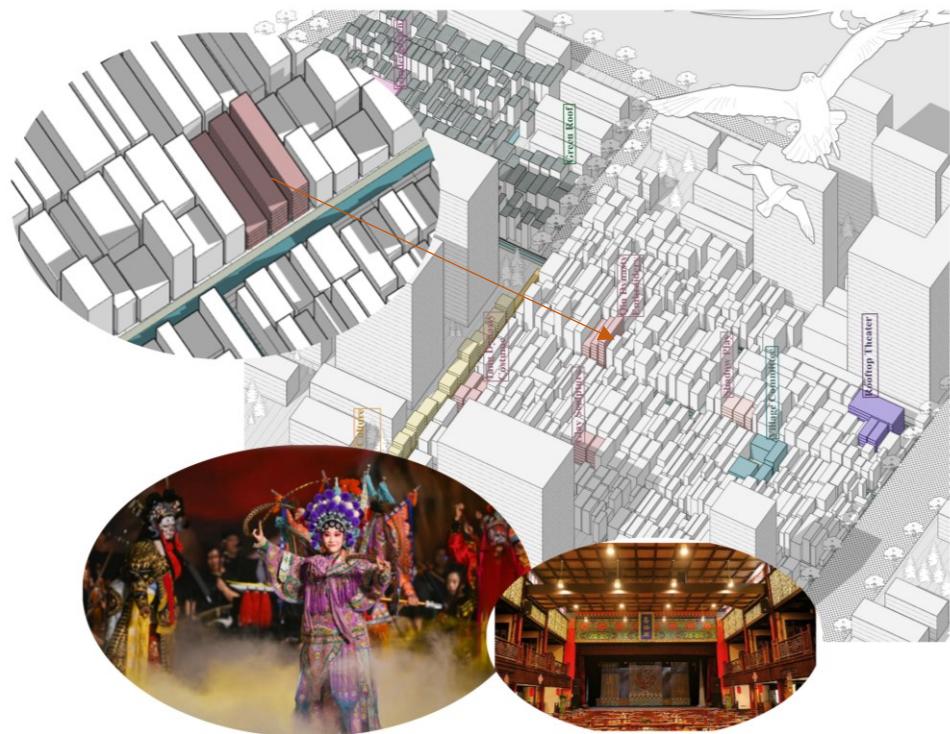


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Feng Xiang clay sculpture is considered an intangible cultural heritage. The finished clay sculptures can be sold, both offline in Jixiang Village and online, thus expanding Jixiang Village's business model. This also creates Jixiang Village's own brand; perhaps Jixiang Village clay sculptures sold to other provinces will give people a memorable impression of the village, thereby increasing its reputation.

### •*Qin dynasty embroidery.*

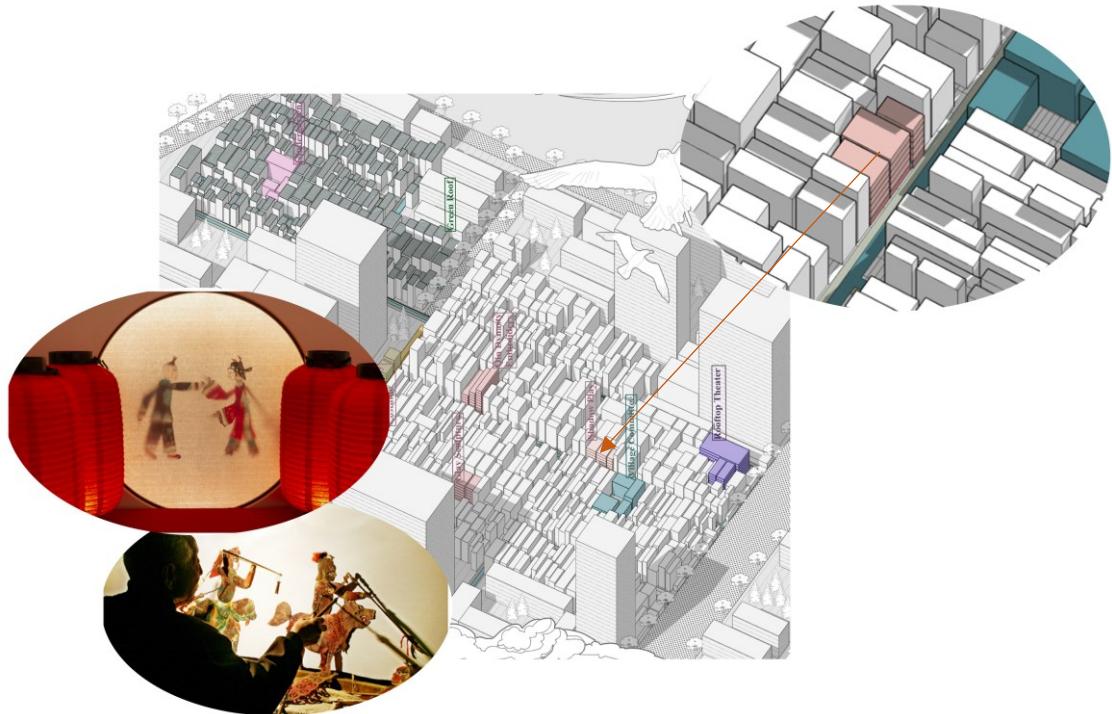
Figure 70. The location of the Qinqiang Opera Theater in Jixiang Village.



Designed by author.

Qinqiang opera is also a form of intangible cultural heritage, but its audience is very narrow. Locally, only the older generation enjoys listening to it, while most young people never listen attentively. Therefore, the opening of the Qinqiang opera theater can be seen as a form of cultural care, enriching the lives of the local elderly. Furthermore, Qinqiang opera allows tourists from other places to experience the bold and forthright character of the people of Shaanxi. Qinqiang opera is a very special local cultural product, so opening a Qinqiang opera theater in Jixiang Village is quite necessary.

•*Shadow play.*



Designed by author.

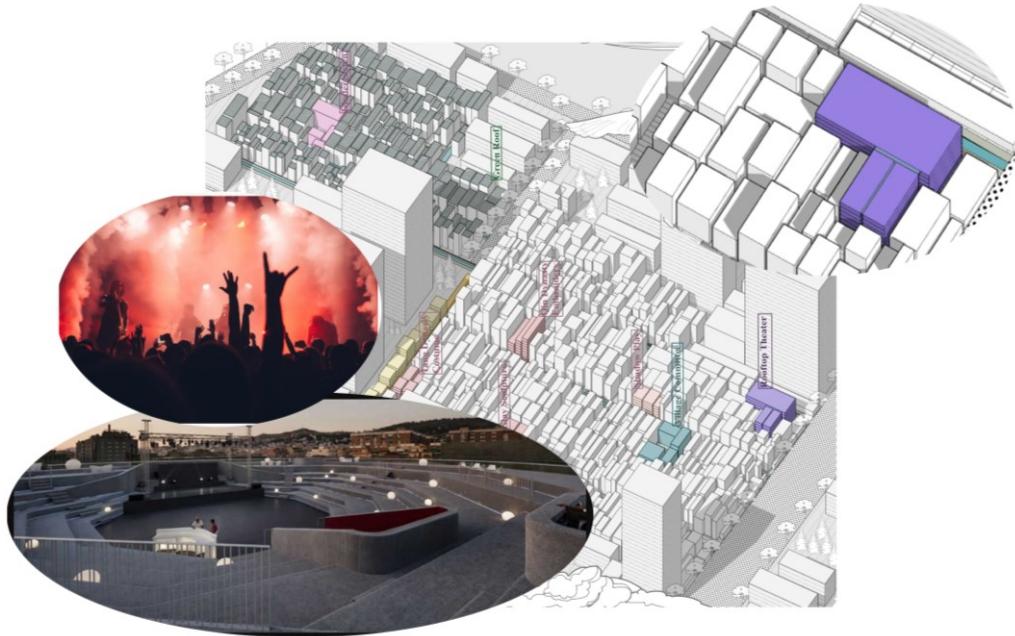
Shadow puppetry, though no longer a mainstream cultural activity, is also a form of intangible cultural heritage. While Qinqiang opera appeals to the elderly, shadow puppetry is a favorite among children. Children can visit Jixiang Village to see various classic stories brought to life through shadow puppetry.

•*Rooftop Theater*

The architectural features of Jixiang Village are very distinctive, with most buildings in northern China featuring flat roofs. Therefore, in Jixiang Village, where ground-level activity space is limited, the flat roofs represent a valuable potential activity area. Establishing a rooftop theater within Jixiang Village would also be a unique attraction, drawing crowds to experience it. It has strong appeal; for example, the rooftop parking lot of Xi'an SEG Plaza is very attractive, with many people coming specifically to see what a

rooftop parking lot is like. Therefore, a rooftop theater could also become a memorable and unique space.

*Figure 71. Location of the open-air rooftop theater in Jixiang Village.*



Designed by author.

**•*Green Roof (Leisure and entertainment area).***

This is a green rooftop installation in Jixiang Village. Given the severe lack of public space in the village, the flat roof design was utilized to create more space for people. This area can be a space for a slower pace of life, serving not only tourists but also local residents, making life more comfortable.

Set up various types of leisure spaces, such as tea rooms, coffee shops, and dining areas; you can also develop rooftop agriculture and urban agriculture to allow more people to experience rural life and get closer to the countryside.

Figure 72. Location and function of the rooftop recreation area.



Designed by author.

## 14.2 New business

In accordance with the requirements of higher-level planning, the government hope to consider new economic models, combining traditional and emerging economic models. This includes more diverse forms of existence and considering business models that integrate offline and online channels.

Jixiang Village already has two business models: accommodation and catering. However, the high-end level of its catering cannot compare with that of shopping malls, and its accommodations are mostly inexpensive. The key is to highlight the uniqueness of Jixiang Village's business model by leveraging its traditional folk culture, something other large shopping malls lack.

Capture the unique culture of urban villages, amplify these folk customs, and integrate them into commerce. Attract a wider range of people compared to before; for example, previously, most visitors to Jixiang Village were simply locals coming for a quick meal. Now, tourists can also be drawn into Jixiang Village.

Figure 73. Business with cultural background.



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Xi'an boasts a rich traditional culture, and integrating cultural concepts into business models is a viable strategy. For example, Jixiang Village can combine Hanfu (traditional Han clothing) and Tang suits both online and offline. Offline, Hanfu can be sold or rented, and the currently popular traditional costume photography can also be a commercial activity. Online, Jixiang Village can sell its own designs of Hanfu and Tang suits. The nearby Xi'an Academy of Fine Arts also allows its students to design. Similarly, Qin embroidery can be sold both

online and offline, and visitors can even try their hand at embroidery. These two examples demonstrate the successful integration of traditional culture with commerce.

### 14.3 Architecture form renovation

The architectural style of Jixiang Village differs greatly from that of cities. There is no overall planning; most buildings are self-constructed by villagers, and in an effort to obtain more compensation, many of the structures are irrational. Lighting is a crucial architectural issue that needs to be considered in urban villages.

Figure 74. Rendering of Jixiang Village street scene.



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The somewhat crowded street layout and the unevenness of the self-built houses in Jixiang Village, along with the colorful billboards, will be preserved. These are unique

symbols of Jixiang Village; though chaotic, they possess a different kind of beauty. The colors of the building facades will be uniformly redesigned.

Figure 75. Comparison photos of the exterior renovation of buildings in Jixiang Village.



Designed by author.

After minor renovations, Jixiang Village retained its architectural structure while standardizing the exterior wall materials. Vertical planting was incorporated, enhancing the aesthetic appeal. Unlike the previous urban village facades, which were often monotonous

and lacked visual appeal, the village now retains its colorful billboards, creating a rough, somewhat wild beauty.

#### 14.4 Urban atmosphere Renovation

At first glance, Jixiang Village is different from the city. So where do these elements come from? The proportion of streets to buildings is different from that of cities, where buildings and streets are not as crowded. The messy billboards, even with a sense of age, are out of place in modern cities, which is also a kind of diverse beauty.

Figure 76. Environmental analysis of Jixiang Village



There are also rooftop gardens designed by residents themselves, as well as flat roofs, which are excellent areas for renovation and utilization. These elements enhance the architectural atmosphere of Jixiang Village and comply with the requirements of higher-level planning, which aims for a diverse atmosphere. The renovation of Jixiang Village did not adopt the traditional approach of complete demolition, but rather preserved its inherent

advantages, retaining different architectural styles within the city and avoiding a homogenized urban landscape.

The most crucial point is the road design in Jixiang Village. Previously, pedestrians, motorcycles, and bicycles shared the roads, resulting in chaotic traffic. The goal of the renovation is to change this situation by considering the possibility of separating pedestrians and vehicles. This could involve soft separation, using different colors and materials to differentiate roads, ensuring that fire trucks can pass when necessary.

Furthermore, new materials, such as permeable materials, will be considered to design the roads as sponge roads. At a higher level, the environmental problems of urban villages will be addressed, transforming Jixiang Village into an environmentally friendly city.

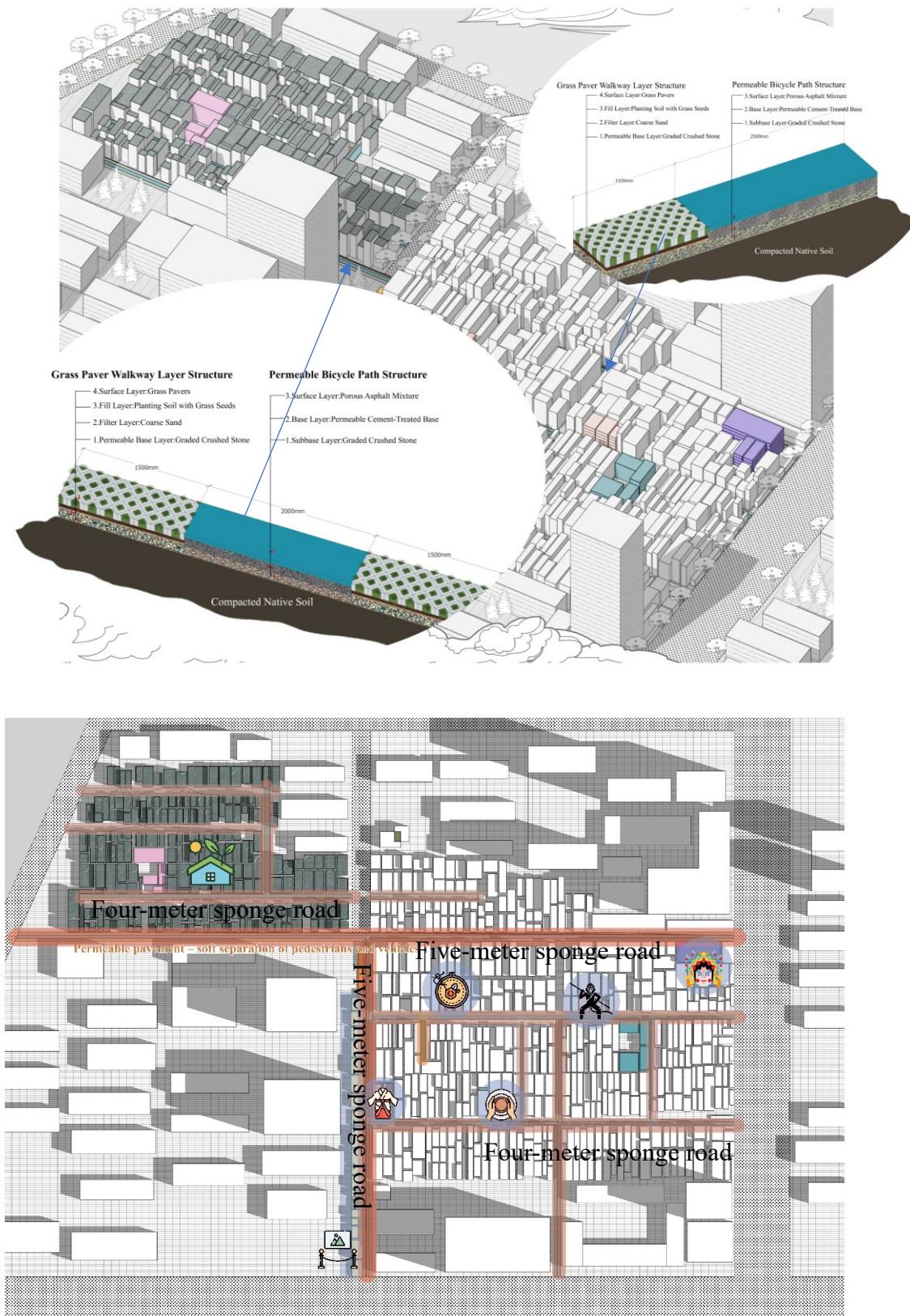
**•*Sponge road.***

Before the renovation, the roads in Jixiang Village were not tiered, and their widths were generally five meters, four meters, and one meter. This renovation divided the roads in Jixiang Village into three tiers with different designs.

The five-meter-wide roads are the highest tier, with a central non-motorized vehicle lane and pedestrian lanes on both sides, all using permeable materials. The four-meter-wide roads have separate pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle lanes on one side. The one-meter-wide roads do not have separate lanes. However, all three tiers of roads use permeable paving.

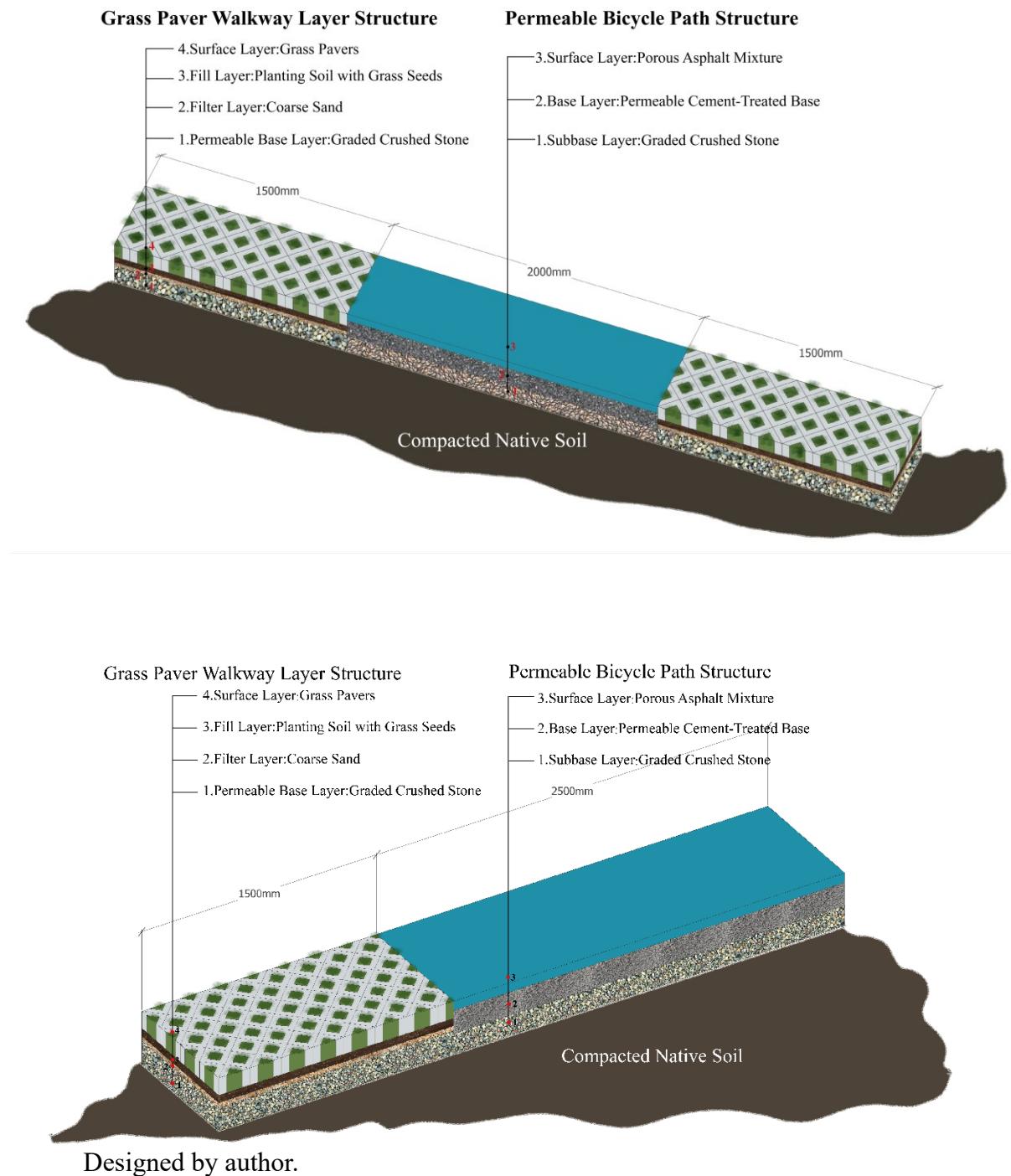
The design of sponge road not only took into account the chaotic traffic situation in Jixiang Village, such as the mixing of pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles, but also the issue of aesthetics. The original road had almost no green plants, but the current grass pavers have increased the proportion of plants in Jixiang Village.

Figure 77. Location of Sponge Road in Jixiang Village.



Designed by author.

Figure 78. Sponge road design.



## Conclusion

### Summary of Core Research Findings

This thesis takes a macro-level approach to study the transformation methods of urban villages. It begins by examining urban development policies to understand their impact on urban villages, identifying when they first appeared and when their transformation began. Then, it delves deeper into the fundamental challenges of urban village transformation and the differences between urban villages and other traditional rural areas by examining two policies most closely related to urban villages: the household registration system and the dual urban-rural system.

After understanding the macro-level background, this article delves into the definition of urban villages and their differences from traditional villages and communities. It then explores who is driving the redevelopment of urban villages, who benefits from it, and who suffers negative impacts from it. The article discusses the positive and negative impacts of urban village redevelopment, as well as existing methods of urban village redevelopment.

Then, further case studies were selected for research. The research was conducted at different levels, closely integrated with policy. It was divided into three levels: national policy guidance, city policies, and regional policies. Through these policies, we can understand the government's plans for the local area and the goals it wants to achieve in the future.

After studying the policies, they were implemented in urban villages, with micro-renovations carried out according to the policy guidance. This was divided into four aspects, with maps showing the corresponding planning areas in specific districts. The approach combined intangible culture with tangible architectural forms and spatial perception, not only complying with local policies but also demonstrating new innovations.

This thesis selects a case study for research and analysis: Jixiang Village, Yanta District, Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province. Following the guidance of the national land spatial planning policy, the paper summarizes and applies these urban development points to Jixiang Village.

### **The value and contribution of the research**

This article does not only study urban villages, but also considers the impact of urban policies on urban villages, combining the micro-level of urban villages with the macro-level of policies.

The unique aspect of this article lies in its combination of theory and practice, achieving policy implementation from top to bottom. It also identifies the unique characteristics of urban villages, their value in preservation, and the greater possibilities after redevelopment, rather than merely considering the negative impacts of urban villages and a one-size-fits-all approach of demolition.

This thesis is based on the latest national land spatial planning policy guidelines, and is not an arbitrary plan, but a modification based on the planning opinions given by the government.

On a practical level, this article selects a real-world case study and provides a feasible renovation plan. The core concept is that, considering the diversity of urban architecture and the products of different periods, these need to be preserved—they are living fossils. Therefore, the architectural style of urban villages is very unique in the city, and their value needs to be considered.

In this case study, based on planning policies and considering various aspects, the core positioning of the urban village was taken into account. It was designed to be a cultural, artistic, and commercial area, in accordance with higher-level planning. Therefore, based on

this positioning and Xi'an's rich historical and cultural heritage, experience zones were set up in different areas of the urban village. The study also considered the improvement of the village's poor sanitation and disorder, as well as higher-level improvements such as road renovations to separate pedestrians and vehicles and implement sponge city pavement.

## **Suggestions**

When considering urban development, we must consider not only the present but also the future. For example, regarding the redevelopment of urban villages, while demolishing them entirely might seem more profitable in the short term, it fails to consider other factors: the issue of resettlement, the diversification of urban space, and the erosion of traditional culture. Furthermore, urban villages, as large urban areas, play a crucial role in urban development. Should they be uniformly demolished and replaced with high-rise buildings? Or should they undergo minor redevelopment first, preserving their potential for future development, perhaps leading to more suitable solutions in the future?

## **Research Limitations and Future Prospects**

This study also has its limitations. For example, different cities have different urban planning policies, making it difficult to apply this formula to other cities. Furthermore, land spatial planning policies have a time limit. For instance, the land spatial planning referenced in this study covers the period from 2021 to 2035. If the city's higher-level plans are changed in the future, the guidance for the lowest-level urban villages may differ.

Secondly, the design schemes proposed in this study remain largely at the conceptual and scheme stage; their long-term social benefits and spatial effects require continuous tracking and evaluation during future implementation.

Future research could draw on the methodology presented in this paper, which integrates local policies and planning. For example, more case studies could be conducted to examine the guidance and recommendations offered by different cities regarding urban villages. Research could even explore whether the public and original residents are satisfied with urban villages redeveloped according to local policies.

In conclusion, urban villages are not "scars" of the city, but rather vibrant organic entities. This article, through a comprehensive discussion of policies, case studies, and design, aims to advocate for a more inclusive and intelligent planning perspective, so that our cities can not only renew their "body" during development, but also inherit their "soul."

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