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"Everyday Heritage" Perservation in China
The Case Study of Liyuanba Village in Sichuan Province

Supervisor

Prof. Carla Bartolozzi

Prof. Francesco Novelli

Arch. Daniele Dabbene

Candidate

Zhang Xiangru

S328762



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Abstract

In the context of rural revitalization, many traditional dwellings are neglected due to a lack of institutional recognition. The life practices and cultural memories carried by these dwellings are difficult to protect. To respond to this problem, this paper introduces the concept of "everyday heritage" to re-examine the value of traditional dwellings and to explore restoration strategies that are more suitable for them.

Through literature review, case study comparison, and survey in Liyuanba Village in Sichuan Province, the study analyzes the differences and complementarities between monumental heritage and everyday heritage. It summarizes the experiences of low-intervention restoration and functional reuse in international cases, and identifies the everyday values of Liyuanba's traditional houses in terms of construction features and spatial memory.

Based on this research, this paper proposes feasible strategies such as family memory archives, low-intervention restoration, and resident participation. These strategies aim to shift traditional dwelling conservation from government-led actions to community cooperation, allowing traditional dwellings to continue and regenerate even under limited resources.

The study argues that the everyday heritage perspective can effectively supplement the limits of the current heritage system and offer a more localized and life-oriented path for protecting traditional dwellings. Future research can be further developed through cross-regional comparison, digital technology applications, and improved participation mechanisms.

Keywords: everyday heritage; rural revitalization; traditional dwellings; architectural restoration; community participation

Index

Acknowledgements	3
Abstract	5
1. Introduction	11
1.1 Research Background	12
1.2 Research Objective	15
1.3 Research Methodology	16
2. Theoretical Basic Research	17
2.1 Overview of Everyday Heritage Theory	18
2.1.1 Official Heritage and Authorized Heritage Discourse	18
2.1.2 The Concept and Development of Everyday Heritage	22
2.1.3 Relationship between Official Heritage and Everyday Heritage	25
2.2 The Development of Architecture Heritage Conservation	27
2.2.1 The Development of Architecture Heritage in Europe	27
2.2.2 The Development of Architecture Heritage in China	32
2.3 Feasible Strategies for the Traditional Dwellings Restoration	36
2.3.1 Restoration Strategies for Traditional Dwellings	36
2.3.2 Strategies for Reusing Village Spaces	38
2.3.3 Spreading Strategy	39
2.4 Reference	41
3. Reference Case Study	45
3.1 Introduction	46
3.2 Paralup_ Italy	47
3.3 Renovation of the Vrlovčnik Homestead_ Slovenia	52
3.4 Casa Clara. House Clara_ Potugal	55
3.5 Lianhua Academy in Guangzhou_ China	59
3.6 Summary	64
4. The Liyuanba Village	65
4.1 Introduction	66
4.2 Village Context	68
4.2.1 Territorial Framework of Village	68
4.2.2 Historical Framework of village	75
4.2.3 Climate Analysis	78
4.2.3 Folk Culture	80
4.2.4 Architectural Form of Village	82
4.3 Introduction to Selected Building	86
4.3.1 Building History	86
4.3.2 Building Form and Function Analysis	86
4.3.3 Interview with the Homeowner	91
4.4 Survey of Selected Building	92
4.4.1 Planimetry	92
4.4.2 Plan	94
4.4.3 Facade	96
4.4.4 Section	98
4.5 Construction Element of Selected Facade	100
4.6 Decay Analysis of Selected Facade	112
4.7 Conclusion of Problems	116
5. Restoration and Design Proposal	117
5.1 SWOT Analysis	118
5.2 Restoration of Everyday Heritage	121
5.3 Design Concept	123
5.3.1 Target Users	123
5.3.2 Design proposal	123
5.4 Restoration of Selected Facade	135
6. Conclusion	138
6.1 Research Conclusion	139
6.2 Research Limitations and Prospects	141
Bibliography	142

Image Index

Image 01 UN World Heritage Application Process -----	18
Image 02 Organization Structure and functions -----	19
Image 03 Comparision between Official Heritage and Everyday Heritage -----	26
Image 04 Stryge-----	28
Image 05 Castelvechio Bridge Before and After Restoration -----	30
Image 06 Scaffolding Repair -----	32
Image 07 Library Building Temple of Confucius -----	33
Image 08 Jiangxi Province Family Archives Exhibition -----	37
Image 09 Local materials and traditional construction techniques-----	37
Image 10 Reuse of Vacant Space -----	38
Image 11 Photo Wall -----	39
Image 12 Ancient dwellings 3D point cloud data display -----	40
Image 13 Paralup Before Restoration-----	47
Image 14 Paralup After Restoration-----	47
Image 15 Renovated buildings in the Paralup -----	48
Image 16 Paralup Architectural Restoration Concept-----	48
Image 17 Planimetry of Paralup -----	49
Image 18 Technical Drawings of Three Restored Huts-----	50
Image 19 Construction Diagram-----	51
Image 20 Construction Details-----	51
Image 21 Interior Photo-----	51
Image 22 Farmhouse Before Restoration-----	52
Image 23 After Restoration Homestead -----	52
Image 24 Night Effect-----	53
Image 25 Masterplan of Homestead -----	53
Image 26 Technical Drawings of Homestead -----	54
Image 27 House Clara Before Restoration -----	55
Image 28 House Clara After Restoration -----	55
Image 29 Ground Floor Plan of House Clara -----	56
Image 30 Second Floor Plan of House Clara -----	57
Image 31 Construction Details of House Crala-----	58
Image 32 Academy Status in 2018 -----	59
Image 33 Aerial view of the renewed site -----	60
Image 34 Masterplan of Lianhua Academy -----	61
Image 35 The section of Lianhua Academy-----	62

Image 36 The first and second platforms -----	62
Image 37 The third platform -----	62
Image 38 The fourth and fifth platform -----	63
Image 39 The embodiment of old and new materials-----	63
Image 40 Comparision of Reference Case Study -----	64
Image 41 Current status of the house (2020)-----	66
Image 42 Design Proposal in Bachelor's Degrass -----	67
Image 43 Physical Model-----	67
Image 44 Site Location in National Context -----	68
Image 45 Transportation to Liyuanba Village -----	69
Image 46 Ming Dynasty Stone Bridge-----	70
Image 47 Village 3D topographic map -----	71
Image 48 Aerial view of the village -----	71
Image 49 Village Masterplan-----	72
Image 50 Village Scenery -----	74
Image 51 Population Analysis -----	77
Image 52 Chronology -----	77
Image 53 Solar Radiation Analysis-----	78
Image 54 Wind Analysis -----	78
Image 55 Orientation Analysis-----	79
Image 56 Vegetable Tofu -----	80
Image 57 Wood Carving -----	81
Image 58 Bamboo Weaving -----	81
Image 59 Building Age Classification -----	82
Image 60 Building Quality Classification -----	83
Image 61 Good Quality Building Sample -----	84
Image 62 Average Quality Building Sample -----	84
Image 63 Poor Quality Building Sample -----	84
Image 64 Building Protection Level -----	85
Image 65 Building Type -----	85
Image 66 Building History -----	86
Image 67 Axonometric drawing -----	87
Image 68 Exterior Photos of the Building-----	88
Image 69 Outer Yard for Drying Grains -----	88
Image 70 Picture of Selected Building-----	88
Image 71 Inner Yard-----	89
Image 72 Internal Wall -----	90

Image 73 Internal Bedroom ----- 90

Image 74 Current Use Analysis----- 91

Image 75 Urban SectionA-A Scale 1:500 ----- 92

Image 76 Planimetry Scale 1:500 ----- 93

Image 77 Plan Scale 1:200 ----- 95

Image 78 Facade A-A Scale 1:200 ----- 97

Image 79 Facade B-B Scale 1:200 ----- 97

Image 80 Section C-C Scale 1:200----- 98

Image 81 Section D-D Scale 1:200----- 98

Image 82 Construction Element of Selected Facade Scale 1:50 -----101

Image 83 Detail Drawing of the Center of Main Ridge Ornament Scale 1:20 -----102

Image 84 Detail Drawing of the Conner of Main Ridge Ornament Scale 1:20 -----102

Image 85 Detail Drawing of the conner of Eaves Scale 1: 20 (cm) -----103

Image 86 Selected Facade -----104

Image 87 Column Plinch -----105

Image 88 Wall Construction-----106

Image 89 Double-leaf Door -----107

Image 90 Single-leaf Roof-----107

Image 91 Vertical-lattice Window -----108

Image 92 Latticed Window-----109

Image 93 Threshold Window -----110

Image 94 Windows Latticed Pattern -----111

Image 95 Decay Analysis of Selected Facade Scale 1:50-----112

Image 96 Architecture Students Surveyed the Building-----121

Image 97 Traditional Clothes of Villages-----122

Image 98 Regeneration Area Diagram-----124

Image 99 Function Analysis-----125

Image 100 Spatial Analysis-----125

Image 101 Design Proposal Scale 1:200 -----127

Image 102 New Addition and Demolition Plan Scale 1:200-----129

Image 103 Furnished Plan Scale 1:200 -----131

Image 104 Detailed Plan Scale 1: 50 -----132

Image 105 Wall Insulation Drawing Scale 1:20 -----134

Image 106 Ground Pavement Drawing Scale 1:20-----134

Image 107 Diagram of Additional Windows-----134

Image 108 Restoration Level of Selected Facade -----135

Image 109 Diagram of Column Joint -----137



1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.2 Research Objective

1.3 Research Methodology

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Cultural Background

In recent years, the theory and practice of architectural heritage conservation have shifted from "monumental heritage" to "everyday heritage". The traditional Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) focuses on monuments, uniqueness, and institutionalized recognition, relying on expert evaluation and legal framework. However, in Chinese practice, this value system often overlooks many traditional dwellings that lack documentary records but rich in everyday life. In rural China, traditional dwellings are large in number and widely distributed. Many are slowly damaged, and lacking policy support, making heritage conservation difficult.

The idea of everyday heritage has become more important in recent years. It emphasizes daily practices, emotional memories, and the use of space. These elements may not have high historical status, but they express community identity and ways of living. The rise of this concept shows a shift in heritage conservation: the focus is changing from "preserving physical evidence" to "continuing living processes".

Liyuanba Village, a traditional settlement in the mountains of northern Sichuan, has timber houses adapted to the local terrain. It also preserves everyday culture shaped by oral history, and local production. At the same time, the village is facing problems such as population loss, vacant houses, aging structures, and declining functions. Under the background of rural revitalization and everyday heritage, exploring low-intervention repair and adaptive reuse of ordinary traditional houses has both theoretical and practical value.

The case-study courtyard is the only type of dwelling in Sichuan Province. This courtyard has strong sample significance and architectural research value, playing a crucial role in

understanding the regional differences and spatial wisdom of traditional dwellings in the mountainous areas of northeastern Sichuan. Liyuanba Village is already listed as a traditional village or cultural heritage site, which means its cultural landscape, building system, and settlement pattern have gained official recognition. Its cultural and historical value is confirmed at the policy level. This gives the site a higher protection priority and makes it easier to receive local government support. It also provides a clearer institutional direction for protection, restoration, and reuse.

Therefore, research on this courtyard not only responds to the current development needs of traditional village protection system, but also provides direct suggestions for future restoration work, cultural tourism planning, and public service development for local governments.

1.1.2 Policy Background in China

2008–2012: "New Rural Construction" with Infrastructure Improvement

During this period, China prioritized the "New Rural Construction" initiative, centering on upgrading rural infrastructure such as roads, water supply, and electricity. Key projects like the "Village-to-Village Access" program aimed to connect remote areas, while efforts to improve housing conditions and alleviate poverty laid the groundwork for rural modernization. The slogan "Socialist New Countryside" emerged, reflecting a holistic approach to enhancing public services, living environments, and village aesthetics.^[1]

[1] National Rural Economic Development
11th Five-Year Plan
Source: https://www.moa.gov.cn/nybgb/2006/dbq/201806/t20180616_6152324.htm

2012–2017: Urban-Rural Integration and "Beautiful Countryside" Initiative

Building on infrastructure improvements, this phase emphasized urban-rural coordination and land rights reform. The "Beautiful Countryside" concept gained traction, balancing ecological

[2] National Rural Economic Development 12th Five-Year Plan
Source: <https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfb/ghwb/201208/W020190905497691697004.pdf>

[3] Rural Revitalization Strategy Plan
Source: https://www.moa.gov.cn/ztl/xczx/xczxlgh/201811/t20181129_6163953.htm

[4] National Rural Economic Development 14th Five-Year Plan
Source: <https://www.ndrc.gov.cn/xxgk/zcfb/ghwb/202103/P020210323538797779059.pdf>

[4] Central Document No. 1 (2025)
Source: https://www.moa.gov.cn/ztl/2025yhwj/zxgz_29966/202502/t20250224_6470398.htm

preservation with development through initiatives like sewage treatment and refined rural planning. Land consolidation and governance of living environments became priorities, supported by frameworks such as the National New Urbanization Plan (2014–2020) and Guidelines on "Beautiful Countryside" Development.^[2]

2018–2020: Rural Revitalization Strategy Takes Shape

Marked by the formal launch of the Rural Revitalization Strategy, this period introduced the "Five Revitalizations" framework—targeting industry, talent, culture, ecology, and governance. A four-tier planning system (national to village levels) and long-term milestones (2020–2050) were established, alongside efforts to strengthen grassroots governance. The Rural Revitalization Strategic Plan (2018–2022) and Central Document No. 1 solidified this top-down approach, prioritizing agriculture, rural areas, and farmers.^[3]

2021–2023: Sustainability and Digital Transformation

Under the 14th Five-Year Plan, rural policies shifted toward digital innovation and green development.^[4] "Digital Villages" leveraged 5G, smart agriculture, and e-governance, while ecological conservation and county-led integration bridged urban-rural gaps. Post-poverty alleviation measures aimed to prevent backsliding, guided by the 14th Five-Year Plan and 2035 Vision and the Digital Rural Development Strategy Outline.

2024–2025 (Ongoing): Deepening Reforms and Holistic Development

The ongoing phase emphasizes institutional reforms, collective economic growth, and equitable public services in education, healthcare, and elderly care. Cultural preservation and multi-stakeholder participation (e.g., NGOs, urban designers) are prioritized, alongside implicit experiments in rural "healing economies." Central Document No. 1 (2024–2025) and localized plans like Zhejiang’s Future Village Construction Guidelines underscore this quality-driven, inclusive vision.

1.2 Research Objective

This research focuses on the restoration and adaptive reuse of traditional dwellings from the perspective of everyday heritage. Through theoretical review, cross-cultural comparison, architectural surveys, and design practice, it aims to develop a protection and regeneration approach suitable for ordinary rural traditional houses.

The specific research objectives are as follows:

Build a theoretical foundation

Clarify the relationship between authorized heritage and everyday heritage, and outline their differences and complementarities in value logic, evaluation mechanisms, and social significance. This provides a new framework for the study of traditional dwellings.

Forming Referable Restoration Strategies

Through a systematic comparison of typical cases from countries such as China and Italy, summarizing universally strategies such as low-intervention restoration, living continuity, and community participation. These strategies offer practical references for the renewal of Liyuanba Village.

Create an archive of traditional dwellings

Carry out a detailed survey of the target courtyard in Liyuanba Village. Document the building conditions and current lifestyles of residents to provide both technical and cultural support for the restoration proposal.

Propose a renewal and design scheme based on everyday life

Based on respecting the original layout and components, explore sustainable, maintainable, and low-cost renewal methods, proposing a design concept of a "living-healing-learning" composite courtyard, enabling dwellings to gain new use value while retaining their authenticity.

1.3 Research Methodology

To achieve the research objectives above, this study uses a multi-dimensional and cross-cultural integrated methodology, including the following aspects:

1. Literature Review

A systematic review of official heritage theories, everyday heritage theories, traditional dwelling conservation, international restoration standards, and relevant rural revitalization policies establishes the theoretical framework for the study.

2. Comparative Case Study

Select representative traditional settlement restoration cases and compare them across dimensions such as functional renewal, material intervention, and participation mechanisms. This helps to summarize practical restoration strategies.

3. Field Survey

Collect first-hand data on building structures, spatial organization, and living scenarios through site visits, architectural survey, component recording and resident interviews.



2. Theoretical Basic Research

2.1 Overview of Everyday Heritage Theory

2.2 The Development of Architecture Heritage Conservation

2.3 Feasible Strategies for the Traditional Dwellings Restoration

2.4 Reference

2.1 Overview of Everyday Heritage Theory

2.1.1 Official Heritage and Authorized Heritage Discourse

[1] Lisa Giombini.2020-12."Everyday Heritage and Place-Making". ESPES,9 (2) (1339-1119):50-61.<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6210933>

[2] Gentry, Kynan. 2013. "History, Heritage and Localism." Policy Studies 34 (5-6): 508-22. doi:10.1080/01442872.2013.864083.

The core concept of cultural heritage has, for a long time, centered around tangible entities and architectural remains with significant historical significance and aesthetic value.^[1] This perspective regards cultural heritage as a unique and non-renewable cultural resource, typically manifested in historic buildings, monuments, ruins, and landscapes. These are often seen as the "masterpieces" or "testimonies" of past civilizations, and thus are endowed with high symbolic significance and prioritized for protection.^[2]

[3] Christine Bonnin ,and Niamh Moore-Cherry.2023."Livelihoods as everyday heritage: urban redevelopment, heritage discourses and marketplace trade in Moore Street, Dublin".International Journal of Heritage Studies,29(7):678-694.<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2023.2211996>

[4] Cleere, Henry. 1996. "The Concept of 'Outstanding Universal Value' in the World Heritage Convention." Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites 1 (4): 227-33. doi:10.1179/135050396793139042.

With the establishment of international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the mid-20th century, the identification and protection of cultural heritage has gradually entered a more institutionalized and internationalized phase. The recognition mechanism of official heritage relies on the standardized process involving submission-expert review-listing-acceptance management.^[3] For example, the selection of world cultural heritage must meet the premise of "Outstanding Universal Value" (OUV) and meet specific historical, artistic, scientific or aesthetic standards.^[4] This system provides cultural heritage with a legal, administrative and financial guarantee basis, effectively promotes heritage identification and protection work around the world.

Image 01 Draw by Author
Source: <https://www.unesco.org/zh/world-heritage>

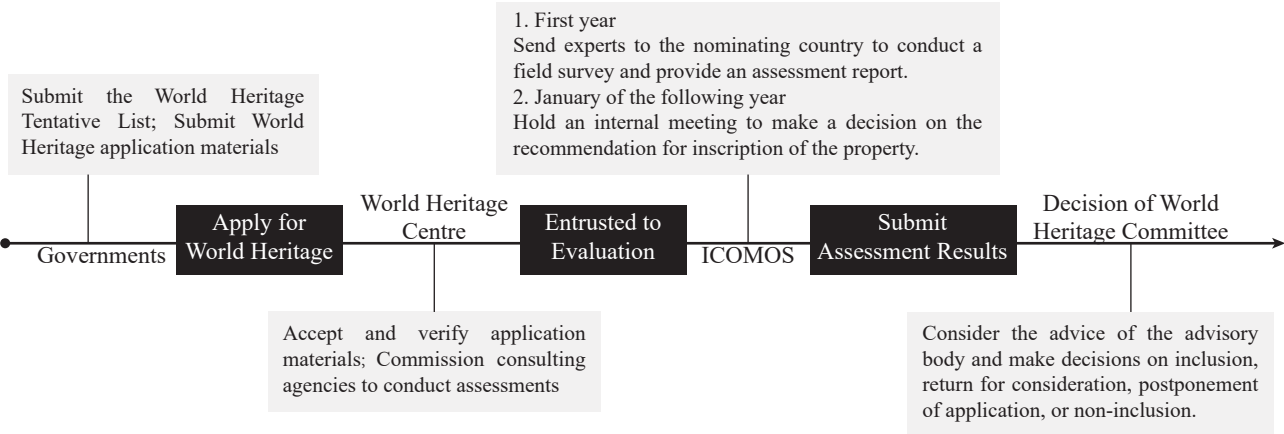


Image 01 UN World Heritage Application Process

On this basis, the concept of Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) has gradually formed. The concept was proposed by Laurajane Smith^[5] to describe a mainstream heritage value system jointly constructed by the state, expert institutions and cultural elites. The core characteristics of AHD include: emphasizing materiality and authenticity, focusing on visual aesthetics and authoritative certification, constructing "historical versions that should be preserved" through professional knowledge, and transmitting and regulating through policies, legislation and education. It can be said that AHD is not only a way of expressing values, but also a cultural logic of institutional operation. It transforms heritage from "space" to "object", making it easy to classify, manage and present.^[6]

This system has clear institutional advantages: it guarantees the historical value of heritage through certification standards, extends the life cycle of heritage through management mechanisms, and promotes its protection and presentation through funding allocation. It constructs an "authorized past" for public understanding and consumption, and at the same time maintains the continuity of cultural identity to a certain extent.

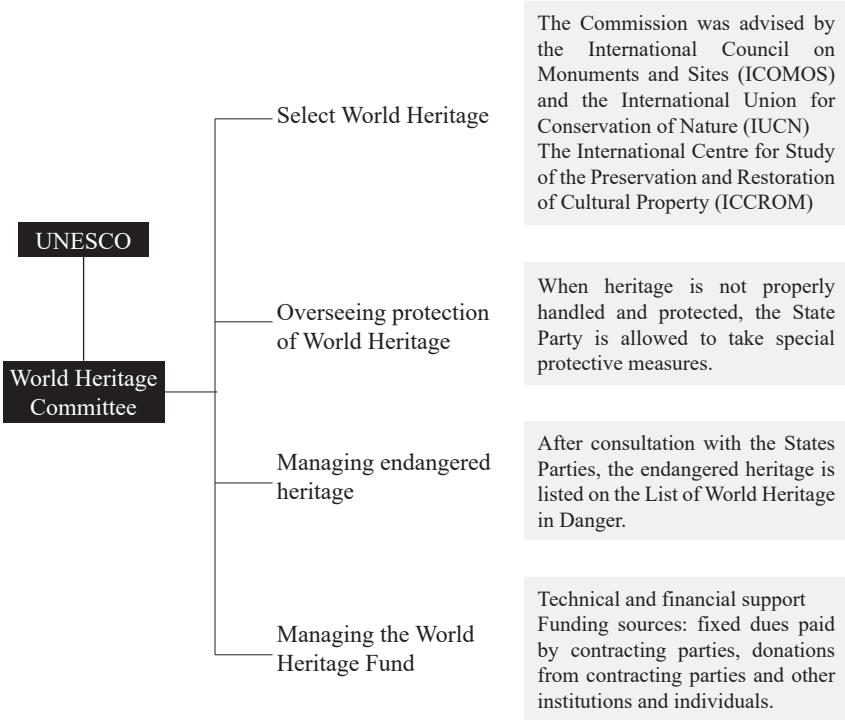


Image 02 Organization Structure and functions

[5] Smith, L. 2006. Uses of Heritage. London: Routledge.

[6] Harvey, David C. 2001. "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies." International Journal of Heritage Studies 7 (4): 319-38. doi:10.1080/13581650120105534.

Image 02 Draw by Author
Source: <https://www.unesco.org/zh/world-heritage>

[7] Gibson, L., and J. Pendlebury. 2009. "Valuing Historic Environments." In *Valuing Historic Environments*, edited by L. Gibson and J. Pendlebury, 1–18. Farnham: Ashgate.

[8] Brown, S. 2015. "Earthwork as Metaphor for Belonging: Implications for Heritage Practice." *Historic Environment* 27 (2): 59–69.

[9] Brown, S. 2023. "From Difficult Dualisms to Entangled Complexity." In *Routledge Handbook of Cultural Landscape Practice*, edited by S. Brown and C. Goetcheus, 62–76. London and New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315203119>.

[10] Jones, S. 2010. "Negotiating Authentic Objects and Authentic Selves: Beyond the Deconstruction of Authenticity." *Journal of Material Culture* 15 (2): 181–203. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183510364074>

[11] Ireland, T., S. Brown, and J. Schofield. 2020. "Situating (In)significance." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 26 (9): 826–844. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2020.1755882>.

[12] Russell, R., and K. Winkworth. 2009. *Significance 2.0: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections*. South Australia: Collections Council of Australia Ltd. <https://www.arts.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/significance20.pdf>.

However, as heritage practice continues to deepen, the reality of a pluralistic society and the complexity of individual experience gradually appeared, and AHD also faces a series of adaptive challenges and cognitive limitations. Excluding the expression of diverse experiences such as gender, race, and class, this tendency of value homogenization limits the recognition of "other forms of heritage", resulting in the long-term "invisibility" of unofficial and non-monumental culture.^[7]

An increasing number of scholars have argued that cultural heritage should be seen as a collection of people, practices, places, and artifacts closely related to everyday social practices and material behaviors.^[8] Although this perspective is not new, it forms a strong theoretical challenge to the traditional view of heritage. The underlying logic of this shift is that the value systems based on official heritage are deeply influenced by a series of long-standing binary frameworks, such as nature/culture, tangible/intangible, official/unofficial, and indigenous/historical.^[9] While these frameworks emphasize authenticity, uniqueness, and non-replicability^[10], they also exclude cultural expressions of the "ordinary", the "repetitive", and the "lived".^[11]

In addition, these institutional standards often concentrate heritage assessment methods on "recognizing significance", that is, determining the representativeness and exemplary value of an object through expert evaluation, archival data, and historical evidence.^[12] Although this mechanism is becoming increasingly standardized in professional practice, it fails to contain spaces and elements that lack documentary support but carry emotional and practical value.

Particularly in the field of rural architectural heritage, a large number of everyday living spaces are often excluded from official heritage listings. Due to the lack of clear construction dates, authorial attribution, or aesthetic features, they often fail to meet the criteria of "historicity" or "aesthetic value" and thus occupy a marginal position within evaluation systems. It

is also unrealistic for the state to protect and repair such a large number of residential buildings. Though not "named" as heritage, these spaces in everyday life constitute key sites of collective memory, identity, and emotional belonging for local residents.

This phenomenon of systemic neglect, to some extent, also due to deeper political and economic logics behind heritage institutions. As Herzfeld^[13] points out, contemporary mainstream heritage governance is built on the neoliberalism, emphasizing economic assessment and sustainable investment in cultural resources. It requires sociopolitical processes to serve the "apparent public interest" rather than the everyday needs of small groups. As a result, non-mainstream heritage that focuses on local practices, cultural rights, and identity expression remains marginalized and is even regarded as a potential challenge to economic rationality and managerial efficiency.^[14]

In this context, the academic community has begun to rethink the cognitive basis of heritage and attempt to move beyond the value framework of AHD by constructing more inclusive, locally grounded, and life-oriented heritage perspectives. This has provided the theoretical basis for the emergence of the concept of "everyday heritage". This concept not only helps address the representational limitations of official heritage but also prompts practitioners to rethink the relationship between cultural conservation and community engagement, offering potential directions for the social and democratic development of future heritage policies.

[13] Herzfeld, M. 2010. "Engagement, Gentrification, and the Neoliberal Hijacking of History." *Current Anthropology* 51 (S2): S259–S267. <https://doi.org/10.1086/653420>.

[14] Herzfeld, M. 2010. "Engagement, Gentrification, and the Neoliberal Hijacking of History." *Current Anthropology* 51 (S2): S259–S267. <https://doi.org/10.1086/653420>.

[15] Waterton, E. L., and M. Gayo. 2020. "The Elite and the Everyday in the Australian Heritage Field." In *Fields, Capitals, Habitus: Australian Culture, Inequalities and Social Divisions*, edited by T. Bennett, D. Carter, M. Gayo, M. Kelly, and G. Noble, 66–82. London: Routledge.

[16] Historic England. 2020. "A Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality." Historic England. Accessed April 30, 2024. <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/about/strategy-ide-nov20-mar23/>.

[17] Tuan Y-F. *Space and place: The perspective of experience*. University of Minnesota Press; 1977.

[18] Relph E. *Place and placelessness*. SAGE Publications Ltd 1976;Available. <https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/place-and-placelessness/book249276>.

[19] Scannell L, Gifford R. Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *J Environ Psychol* 2010;30(1):1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.09.006>.

[20] Norberg-Schulz C. *Genius loci: Towards a phenomenology of architecture*. Rizzoli 1980;Available. <http://archive.org/details/geniuslocitoward0000norb>.

[21] Zhang Y, Guo Y, Ji L. Going somewhere or for someone? The Sense of Human Place Scale (SHPS) in Chinese rural tourism. *Tour Manag* 2022;91:104530. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2022.104530>.

2.1.2 The Concept and Development of Everyday Heritage

In traditional perceptions of heritage, cultural heritage is often seen as a grand view closely associated with national narratives, commemorative buildings, museum collections, and historical events. However, in reality, most people connect with the past through familiar places, objects, images, and activities in their daily lives.^[15] Practices such as gardening, cooking, handicrafts, and daily labour, despite carrying rich cultural memories and emotional value, are rarely covered by existing heritage lists, assessment systems, and policy frameworks.^[16] These overlooked practices are not only integral to daily life but also serve as important pathways for marginalised communities such as Indigenous peoples, women, children, and rural groups to construct their cultural identities.

From a theoretical perspective, everyday heritage is closely linked to the concept of "sense of place". Since Tuan^[17] and Relph^[18] introduced this concept, scholars have engaged in extensive discussions on place attachment, place identity, and a sense of belonging^[19]. In the field of architecture, Norberg-Schulz^[20] further emphasised the symbolic significance and cultural atmosphere embodied by places through the concept of "Genius Loci", providing a foundational perspective for understanding the spatial value in everyday heritage. In a cross-cultural context, perceptions of place exhibit significant ambiguity. Especially in the Chinese context, as the country has deepened its promotion of the "cultural confidence" and "cultural revival" strategies, discussions on the spirit of place, the continuity of daily life, and cultural fluidity have intensified^[21], offering new research pathways for understanding the social, temporal, and local dimensions of heritage.

Against this dual background of theory and reality, "everyday heritage" has emerged as a more inclusive, non-elitist perspective on heritage that is gaining attention. The "Everyday Heritage" project, initiated by the Australian Research Council and industry

partners,^[22] is a key representative of this research direction. The project emphasizes not imposing a fixed definition on everyday heritage but rather viewing it as a contextual, relational concept closely tied to ordinary life, advocating the identification and expression of cultural value through various media such as places, activities, communities, and objects. The research team aims to develop more inclusive heritage tools and methods by exploring collaborative approaches involving both professionals and the public.

Connecting heritage with everyday practices not only offers new theoretical perspectives for heritage research but also opens up possibilities for transformative change in practice. Sociologist Les Back^[23] points out that studying everyday life helps to inspire people to "re-enchant" themselves with the things around them and enables them to connect "the smallest stories" with "the greatest social change". This renewed focus on everyday experiences is particularly meaningful in the field of heritage because it responds to the current trend of commercialising cultural values^[24], as well as the power mechanisms in heritage practices that may exacerbate social inequality.

In current research trends, everyday heritage increasingly integrates digital humanities, visual culture, and material culture analysis methods, focusing on forms of expression overlooked by mainstream heritage recognition systems. Unlike traditional heritage standards oriented toward "outstanding universal value" (e.g., *the World Heritage Convention*), everyday heritage emphasizes the cultural meanings perceived by individuals and communities through their lived practices, including memory, emotional attachment, sense of place, and social interaction^[25]. Small but full of living spaces such as traditional markets, alleys, and neighbourhood shops, though difficult to capture institutionally, hold significant positions in residents' identity and cultural memory^[26].

In urban environments, the manifestation of everyday heritage

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is particularly evident. Cities are not only spaces that cultural memory are concentrated, but also exist as "living heritage", whose identity and meaning are shaped by resident's living experiences, social interactions, and everyday landscapes^[27]. Among these, public spaces—as a place where everyday activities take place, such as walking, playing, communicating, and trading—carry significant social value^[28]. These spaces evoke emotional attachments to place and serve as important bonds in the construction of community identity^[29]. However, since public spaces are often viewed as designed landscapes, their potential in heritage practices remains largely untapped^[30], meaning that everyday heritage still faces the risk of marginalisation in actual conservation efforts.

In summary, the study of everyday heritage not only expands the scope of heritage but also prompts us to re-examine the definition, value, and authority of heritage. It emphasises uncovering cultural significance from the everyday practices of ordinary people, providing a more socially and locally grounded approach to heritage research. It also offers a theoretical foundation and practical direction for future urban renewal, community participation, and cultural governance.

2.1.3 Relationship between Official Heritage and Everyday Heritage

Although there are significant differences between "official heritage" and "everyday heritage" in terms of formation background, value logic and evaluation mechanism, the two are not in a completely opposite state, but constitute a complementary relationship between system and locality. From the perspective of functional positioning, official heritage emphasizes the establishment of a grand narrative, with "historical representativeness" as the core logic; while everyday heritage pays more attention to local experience and individual memory, and reflects local cultural expression through "life relevance".

In terms of evaluation mechanism, official heritage relies on institutionalized indicators such as OUV (Outstanding Universal Value), emphasizes expert guidance, and its protection system has strong resource guarantees; in contrast, the identification of everyday heritage relies more on community participation and situational experience, and its value is often difficult to quantify in a standardized way, so it is ignored, especially micro-spaces such as non-structural components and living places.^[31]

The two also reflect essential differences in cognitive logic: official heritage tends to "materialize" heritage and present it in the form of exhibitions, displays, and historical reproduction; while everyday heritage emphasizes "spatialization" and "usability", focusing on the process of heritage being continuously perceived, practiced, and emotionally attached in daily life.^[32]

However, everyday heritage is not a negation or subversion of the official heritage system, but should be regarded as its supplement and extension. Especially when facing the practice of local architectural heritage protection, the local perspective, social dimension and emotional value emphasized by everyday heritage just make up for the limitations of "desocialization" and "decontextualization" in the official heritage system. On the one

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[32] Shin Ye-Kyeong ,and Jung Hye-Jin.2015."New Spatial Possibilities of Railway Station: Everyday Heritage, Enjoyable Landscape",118():377-383. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proeng.2015.08.437>

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hand, the institutional advantages of official heritage can provide the necessary resource support, policy guarantee and governance framework for everyday heritage; on the other hand, the community identity and public participation inspired by everyday heritage can reversely promote the official heritage to local co-construction and enhance its practicality and real relevance.^[33]

Therefore, promoting the two-way integration of official heritage and everyday heritage will not only help to build a more inclusive, fair and socially resilient cultural heritage protection system, but also provide a theoretical basis and operational path for current issues such as local residential restoration, non-structural component identification and community building. This integration approach responds to the global trend of heritage diversity protection.

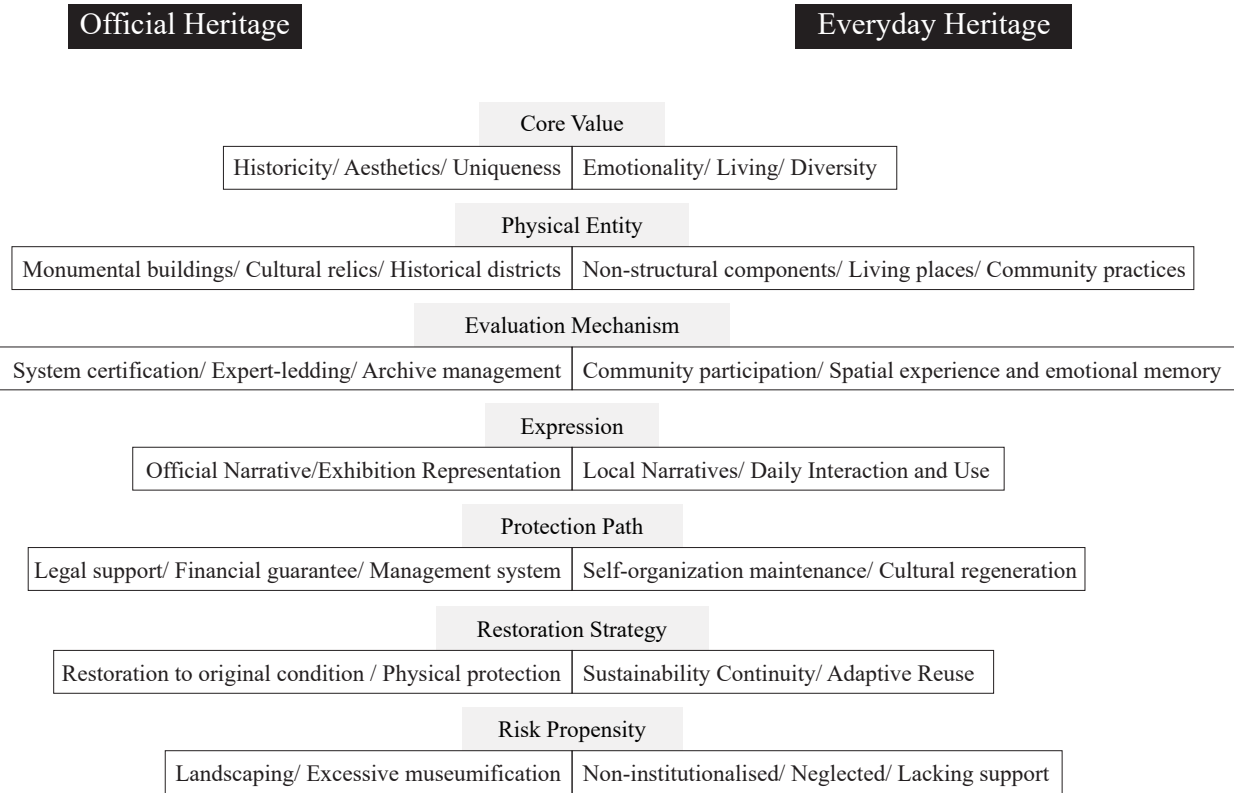


Image 03 Comparision between Official Heritage and Everyday Heritage
Draw by author

2.2 The Development of Architecture Heritage Conservation

2.2.1 The Development of Architecture Heritage in Europe

The development of architectural restoration theory is a process of gradual transition from practice to theorisation, and then to institutionalisation and diversification. Starting from Romanticism in the 19th century, European architectural restoration has a transition from restoration attempts with unified styles to conservationism that emphasizes historical traces, and then to the ethical framework established by the Venice Charter in the mid-20th century, and finally to a framework for diverse values, social participation and sustainable development.

1. 19th Century: From Restoration to Conservationism

Before the 19th century, due to harsh natural conditions, limited technological development, Western society didn't have a clear concept of heritage. People generally regarded historic buildings as ordinary houses and treated ancient buildings casually. Therefore, there was no unified theory and thought forming during this period.

In the early 19th century, with the rise of romanticism and national consciousness, historical buildings began to be regarded as cultural symbolism, and architectural restoration gradually became an action that carries cultural memory. Against this background, "stylistic restoration" or "restorationism" became the dominant view in the early days.

This perspective promotes the protection and restoration of ancient buildings, emphasizing the preservation of their original appearance and historical authenticity. During the restoration process, attention is paid to the unity of the overall style of the building, and the mixing of styles from different historical periods is avoided as much as possible. Emphasize the artistic value of the building and strive to restore its original aesthetic effect. The

[34] Viollet-le-Duc, E. On Restoration; Sampson Low, Marston Low, and Searle: London, UK, 1875

most representative is the French architect Viollet-le-Duc. He believes that the purpose of restoration is not only to repair the damaged parts, but to restore the building to an "idealized original state", even if this state did not exist in history.^[34]

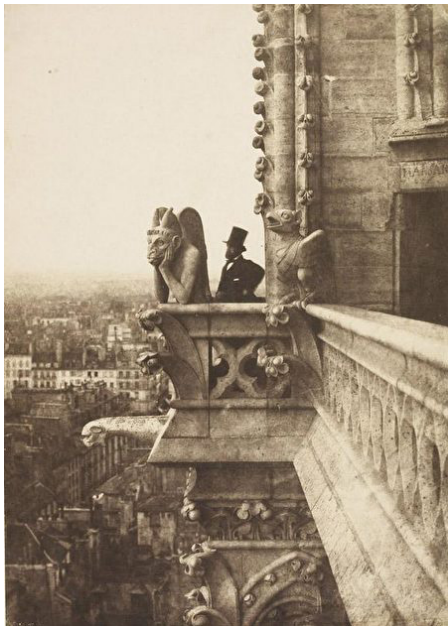


Image 04 Stryge

Source: Charles Neiger's 1851 photograph of the vampire. Added by Viollet-le-Duc during restoration work in the mid-19th century.

[35] Ruskin, J. Seven Lamps of Architecture; Charles, E., Ed.; Merrill: Columbus, OH, USA, 1892; Volume 17.

[36] Yount, A.E. William Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings: Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Historic Preservation in Europe. Ph.D. Thesis, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, USA, 2005.

At the same time, John Ruskin from UK believed that the "historical traces" of the building are an important manifestation of cultural value, and any "restoration" behavior is a destruction of history. Ruskin emphasized that "restoration is destruction."^[35]

His ideas influenced William Morris, who founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in 1877, clearly proposing the protection principles of "minimum intervention" and "respect for original appearance",^[36] marking the establishment of conservationism or anti-restorationism.

During this period, architectural restoration theory began to shift from "engineering intervention" to "cultural judgment", and triggered the first major split in restoration ethics: whether to restore the building to its original state or to "keep it as it was".

2. Early to Mid-20th century: the Proposal of Multiple Values and the Systematization of Restoration Theory

In the 20th century, architectural restoration theory was further

deepened. The core issues were no longer just "whether to repair or not", but "why to restore", "what to preserve" and "how to balance the value". Austrian scholar Alois Riegl proposed the theory of "modern cult of monuments", dividing the monumental value into age value, age value, historical value, and intentional value, as opposed to present-day values, including use value and art value, and clearly pointed out for the first time that architectural heritage is a multi-level and multi-dimensional value complex.^[37] He pointed out that different values often conflict with each other, and restoration should strike a balance between "respecting historical traces" and "maintaining overall harmony". This theoretical transformation laid the foundation for the subsequent "critical restoration".

Cesare Brandi of Italy, in his "Teoria del Restauro" published in 1963, proposed that "restoration is a rational intervention in the material and historical state of the work of art",^[38] emphasizing the three principles of minimal intervention, reversibility and recognizability.^[39] He argued that any new added part should be distinguishable from the original part, but should not destroy the overall artistic unity. Brandi's theory has profoundly influenced subsequent international documents, especially the formulation of the Venice Charter.

3. 1964: The Venice Charter was Issued, Establishing a Consensus on Modern Restoration

The formulation of the Venice Charter in 1964 was a watershed in the systematization of international architectural heritage protection theory. This document, drafted by ICOMOS (*International Council on Monuments and Sites*), established the core principles of modern restoration: authenticity, integrity, minimal intervention, reversibility, priority of traditional materials, and recognisable historical layers. It emphasized that restoration should "respect the historical evolution and cultural background of the building itself."^[40] The document marked the shift of the restoration concept from "technical behavior" to "value behavior."

[37] Riegl, A. The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin. *Oppositions* 1982, 25, 20–51.

[38] Morera, C.S. Cesare Brandi and Contemporary Art: Theory, Aesthetic and Restoration. *A Tempestuous Dialectic. Conversaciones* 2019, 7, 249–266.

[39] Van Saaze, V. Key Concepts and Developments in Conservation Theory and Practice. In *Installation Art and the Museum*; Amsterdam University Press: Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2013; pp. 35–60.

[40] ICOMOS. International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter 1964); ICOMOS: Paris, France, 1964.

Image 05

Source: <http://www.silkroads.org.cn/portal.php?mod=view&aid=11564>



Image 05 Castelvécchio Bridge Before and After Restoration

[41] Orbasli, A. *Architectural Conservaiton Principles and Practice*; Blackwell: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2008.

After the Charter, international organizations such as ICOMOS and UNESCO gradually established a restoration policy framework centred on the Venice Charter.^[41]

4. 1970s–1990s: Context Expansion and Cultural Diversity

With the awakening of global heritage awareness, the traditional restoration concept centered on "monuments" and based on Western art history was under challenge. In 1972, the adoption of the *World Heritage Convention (WHC)* expanded the scope of architectural heritage from "monuments" to historical towns, cultural landscapes and cultural routes. This marked the beginning of restoration theory's focusing on spatial integrity and cultural diversity.^[42]

In 1979, *the Burra Charter* proposed by Australia emphasized the concept of "cultural significance" and proposed for the first time that restoration must be based on the recognition and value judgment of the local community, which promoted the subsequent development of "locally-based restoration". This initiated the international dissemination of the "people-oriented" restoration concept.^[43]

In 1994, *the Nara Document on Authenticity* further redefined the concept of "authenticity" and proposed that "authenticity has cultural context".^[44] The diverse understandings of "preservation, restoration and use" in different cultural traditions should be recognized. This document provides theoretical legitimacy for the restoration practices of Asia, Africa and indigenous cultures.^[45]

[42] UNESCO. *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding and Contemporary Role of Historic Areas*; UNESCO: Paris, France, 1976.

[43] ICOMOS. *The Australia ICOMOS Guidelines for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance The Burra Charter*. 1979.

[44] ICOMOS. *The Nara Document on Authenticity*; ICOMOS: Paris, France, 1994.

[45] Stovel, H. *Origins and Influence of the Nara Document on Authenticity*. *APT Bull. J. Preserv. Technol.* 2008, 39, 9–17.

During this stage, the restoration concept shifted from "technology and aesthetics" to "community and identity"; the restoration objects shifted from "single monuments" to "cultural landscapes and historical cities"; and restoration participation shifted from "expert autocracy" to "multi-party consultation."

5. Since the 21st Century: Restoration Transformation towards Sustainable Development

In the 21st century, restoration theory has been further combined with sustainable development, climate change response and social equity, emphasizing that architectural heritage is not only a "cultural object" but also a "social resource".

The Vienna Memorandum^[46] of 2005 and *the Valletta Principles*^[47] of 2011 proposed that historical cities and heritage spaces are "living organisms" and that restoration should not only be the restoration of historical images, but also the maintenance of urban life quality and cultural continuity.

Based on this, the *"Living Heritage Approach"*^[48] and *"The Future of Our Past: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action"* widely proposed since 2013 have further promoted restoration theory towards adaptive reuse, community governance, resource recycling and climate justice.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have also become an important reference point for restoration policies, emphasizing that restoration should achieve a balance through environmental, social, and economic dimensions. and architectural heritage is regarded as a "resource with environmental significance and social resilience".

Restoration at this stage is no longer about preserving the building itself, but about activating the social functions and environmental potential carried by the building. Restoration becomes a participatory, situated, and systemic practice.

[46] UNESCO. *Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture*; UNESCO: Paris, France, 2005.

[47] ICOMOS. *The Valletta Principles for the Safeguarding and Management of Historic Cities, Towns and Urban Areas*; UNESCO: Paris, France, 2011;

[48] ICCROM. *People-Centred Approaches to the Conservation of Cultural Heritage: Living Heritage*; ICCORM: Rome, Italy, 2015.

2.2.2 The Development of Architecture Heritage in China

The development of Chinese architectural restoration theory has distinct local characteristics, evolving from empirical practices to institutionalised construction, and then to theoretical diversity and international alignment. Overall, it does not have a clear philosophical foundation like Western restoration theory, but rather relies more on local practical experience and policy promotion. Unlike Western restoration traditions based on art history and philosophy, Chinese restoration thinking was initially based more on practicality and empirical judgement, and gradually became systematized in the mid-20th century.

1. Before the End of the 19th Century: Experience and Practicality were the Main Focus

In ancient China, the repair of ancient buildings mainly relied on the experience of craftsmen, and there was no systematic theoretical system. The purpose of restoration was mostly for practical considerations, such as maintaining ancestral temples, government offices or important buildings, and was closely related to religious rituals. As wooden structures are fragile, they are usually maintained in a "repair while using" manner. In special cases, complex "scaffolding repair" or "relocation protection" methods are used.

Scaffolding repair: It involves the process of dismantling, repairing, reinforcing the entire or partial structure of a building (the main load-bearing components of the building, such as beams, are severely damaged), and ultimately reinstalling it to its original state.

Image 06
Source: <http://www.nfgjz.com/374.html>



Image 06 Scaffolding Repair

2. Late 19th century to the First Half of the 20th Century: the Emergence of Protection Awareness

At the end of the 19th century, with the introduction of Western heritage protection concepts, Chinese intellectuals began to pay attention to the cultural and historical value of ancient buildings.

With the establishment of the Construction Society, scholars such as Liang Sicheng and Liu Dunzhen promoted the systematic study of traditional Chinese architecture.^[49] They not only sorted out ancient documents and established the discipline of architectural history, but also actively participated in the surveying and repair of cultural relics and buildings. At the practical level, Liang Sicheng proposed the principles of "not changing the original state of cultural relics" and "identifiability" in the restoration of Liuhe Pagoda and Qufu Confucius Temple. These principles coincided with the concepts of "minimum intervention" and "reversibility" popular in Europe at that time, and also laid the foundation for the later restoration concept.

[49] Baohu Fazhi Jianshe Shi Huimou [a review of the legislative history of China's cultural heritage conservation]. China Ancient City 3: 27–33.

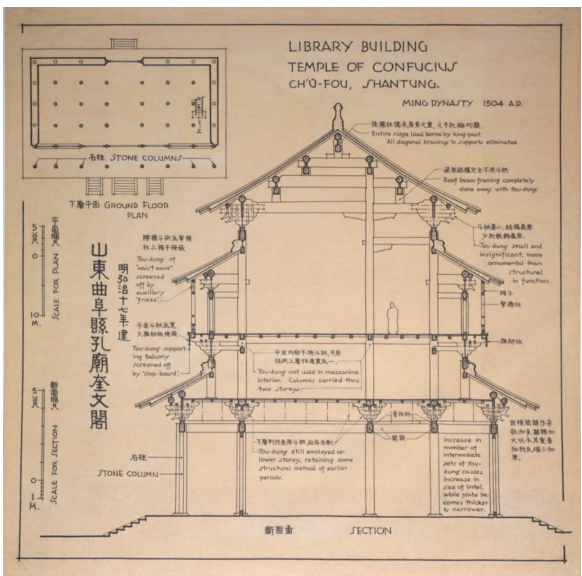


Image 07 Library Building Temple of Confucius

Image 07
Source: *Graphic History of Chinese Architecture*_Liang Sicheng

3. Mid-20th Century: The Establishment of Cultural Heritage Protection Systems and Theoretical Framework

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the national level began large-scale cultural heritage protection efforts, and architectural restoration was gradually institutionalized. Since

the 1950s, a hierarchical protection system has been established, and the *"Interim Measures for the Conservation and Management of Protected Cultural Heritage Sites" (IMPCHS)* was issued in 1961, establishing the "key cultural relics protection unit" system and the "Two Emphases and Two Benefits" principle (i.e., emphasizing protection and utilization, benefiting the present and benefiting future generations).

Liang Sicheng and others continued to promote concepts such as "restoring the old as it was", "historical environmental protection", and "gradual utilization of cultural relics and buildings". However, "restoring the old as it was" also had different understandings and even abused during this period. On the one hand, Liang Sicheng's "tooth filling restoration" clearly advocated the preservation of original components as much as possible and the use of record replacement behavior, out of respect for historical information; on the other hand, traditional craftsmen continued the method of "restoring the old as it was new" and tended to replace the old with the new, causing many restoration projects to have the problem of "a brand new look".^[50]

4. After the 1980s: The Establishment of Standards and International Integration

After the reform and opening up, China's restoration concepts and practices have systematic adjustments. After the implementation of the *Cultural Heritage Protection Law(CHPL)* in 1982, the objects of protection were expanded from individual cultural relics to historical cities, blocks and settlements. At the same time, the second cultural relics survey further promoted the establishment of the principle of "value assessment, graded protection, and ational utilization".

On the theoretical level, China has gradually tried to communicate with international restoration standards. In 1993, China officially joined ICOMOS, and in 2000, it issued the *"Principles for the conservation of heritage sites in China"*. Based on the summary of domestic experience, the guidelines

absorbed the internationally restoration principles advocated by the Venice Charter, and tried to combine them with the technical characteristics of wooden structures. It proposed principles such as "recognizability", "minimum intervention", "authenticity maintenance", "raw materials first".

However, since restoration practices are often affected by factors such as weak legal effect, reliance on technical experience, the guidelines still have certain problems in actual operation, such as excessive restoration and neglect of raw materials.^[51]

5. Since 2000: Local Integration and Diversified Exploration

In recent years, with the introduction of concepts such as "cultural landscape", "living heritage" and "community participation", China's restoration work has begun to explore localization paths. While respecting traditional craftsmanship, it attempts to integrate international standards. Some regions have also begun to pay attention to the protection of intangible culture, daily heritage and residents' sense of identity, but the theoretical system is still being improved, and the practical effects vary greatly from place to place.

[51] Li, Xiaodong. 2005. *Wenwu Xue* [Cultural Relics]. Beijing: Xueyuan Press.

[50] National Cultural Heritage Administration. 2009. *Zhongguo Wenhua Yichan Shiye Fagui Wenjian Huibian (1949–2009)* [compilation of laws and regulations on cultural heritage undertakings in China (1949–2009)]. Beijing: Cultural Relics Press.

2.3 Feasible Strategies for the Traditional Dwellings Restoration

In the previous analysis of the concept of everyday heritage and architectural restoration theory, this article points out that many traditional dwellings are not yet officially recognized as key protected objects, still carry rich daily memories and cultural values. However, in the current practice of traditional architectural restoration in China, official restoration efforts often focus on a few key cultural relics with historical significance or tourism potential. For the large number of ordinary traditional dwellings that are spread in a wide area, they face practical limitations such as insufficient manpower, tight funds, and difficult approval. In this context, it is worth thinking about how to moderately restore and reuse these spaces in a more flexible way.

Based on this, this article combines the value dimensions of "locality" and "traces of life" emphasized by everyday heritage, as well as the principles of "minimum intervention" in restoration theory, and summarizes some feasible restoration strategies for traditional dwellings. These strategies attempt to propose a more action-oriented "bottom-up" path. By stimulating the residents' own restoration intentions, encouraging organizations and individuals who love rural culture to participate in the restoration and revitalization process, these old houses can be reintegrated into current life while continuing their original appearance.

2.3.1 Restoration Strategies for Traditional Dwellings

1. Create a family history archive

Before the restoration, organize oral collection of "original residents" or "family history" about the building to gain an deep understanding of the house's usage process and daily habits. Record the information using methods such as audio and video recordings, interview transcripts, and photo scans, and organise it into text and images to be attached to the restoration drawings or digital files, creating a file for each household.

At the same time, draw a diagram of the house's usage changes (such as plan changes, material replacement). This not only provides a basis for restoration and makes the update more in line with the original life logic, but also allows the house to return from a "physical structure" to a "family space" and rebuild the emotional relationship between people and buildings.



Image 08 Jiangxi Province Family Archives Exhibition

2. Low-intervention, Maintainable Methods

During the restoration process, traditional techniques and local materials are preferred, and low-intervention, easy-to-maintain methods are implemented. For example, lime mortar is used to repair walls and similar wood can be used to reinforce the roof frame. Local craftsmen are invited to participate in the construction to pass on local construction skills, which is also convenient for villagers to maintain in the later stage.



Image 09 Local materials and traditional construction techniques

Image 08
Source: http://www.cnhubei.com/wwlb_v12/201706/t3843016.shtml

Image 09
Source: <https://www.gooood.cn/village-lounge-shangcun-china-by-sup-atelier.htm>

3. Resident Participation Day

During the restoration process, "resident participation days" can be set up to invite family members, village representatives, and craftsmen in the building to participate in the discussion or trial operation of the restoration plan. Such meetings can be held in public spaces such as squares, and residents can be guided to express their opinions through picture displays, model demonstrations, etc.. This making the restoration process into a process of public consultation and re-memory.

2.3.2 Strategies for Reusing Village Spaces

1. Reuse of Vacant Houses

For traditional dwellings that are no longer suitable for living but the structure are still acceptable, they can be transformed into shared spaces to continue to carry the daily activities of the community. For example, a village meeting hall, a small library, a convenient medical center can be set up.

The original house space layout can be retained to avoid large-scale demolition and construction. The use of shared spaces should be determined through consultation among villagers, and management can be rotated or a caretaker can be designated to ensure daily usability and maintenance feasibility.

Image 10
Source: <https://www.gooood.cn/village-lounge-shangcun-china-by-sup-atelier.htm>



Image 10 Reuse of Vacant Space

2. Create a "House Adoption Mechanism"

For traditional dwellings with unclear property rights or long-term vacancy, a "adoption mechanism" can be introduced. The village collective will register and integrate them, and publicly solicit adoption intentions from villagers, returning youth or external organizations (such as cultural teams, resident programs).

By signing a adoption agreement, the restoration investment, usage method and term, and property rights retention method are clearly defined. The adopting party is responsible for repairs and daily maintenance, and obtains the right to use for a certain period of time. The village collective retains supervision and public ownership. This mechanism can not only solve the problem of old houses that cannot be repaired, but also stimulate new uses.

2.3.3 Spreading Strategy

1. Set up a "Family Photo Wall"

Set up a "photo wall" on the exterior wall or living room wall of a traditional residence to display family photos, architectural changes, wedding photos, birthday party photos and other images with emotional value. Accompanied by a timeline and a brief description to tell the history of the house and the family.

The photo wall can serve as part of the restored exhibition space or as a "memory portal" in daily life scenes. This approach is suitable for ordinary residences that cannot be incorporated into the formal exhibition system, promoting public understanding and strengthening the intimacy and locality of the space.



Image 11 Photo Wall

Image 11
Source: <https://www.gooood.cn/winter-country-yard-by-linjian-design-studio.htm>

2. Promote Digital Recording and Dissemination

From the preparation stage of restoration, the entire process should be continuously recorded with images, including original appearance, villagers' speaking, construction process, etc.. Organize and preserve these in various forms such as short videos, photo collections, and professional digital technology.

The images is not only used for archival purpose, but should also be posted on social media so that more people can see it. This strategy enhances the transparency and dissemination of the project, improves the external image of the village, and accumulates experience for the restoration of other residential buildings in the future.

Image 12
Source: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/1824425750>



Image 12 Ancient dwellings 3D point cloud data display

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3. Reference Case Study

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Paralup_Italy
- 3.3 Renovation of the Vrlovčnik Homestead_Slovenia
- 3.4 Casa Clara. House Clara_Potugal
- 3.5 Lianhua Academy_China
- 3.6 Summary

3.1 Introduction

After reviewing the development of "everyday heritage", the ideas of European and Chinese heritage conservation, and proposing related strategies for restoration and regeneration, this chapter aims to test the feasibility of these strategies through the analysis of typical cases. Therefore, it is important to select representative examples that are relevant to the selected case study.

Among them, Paralup in Italy and the Vrlovčnik Homestead in Slovenia are both typical mountain villages, which match the mountain environments discussed in this research. They provide direct reference for the restoration and regeneration of "everyday heritage" under specific geographical conditions in terms of construction methods, settlement form, and environmental adaptation strategies.

Casa Clara in Portugal shows a clear "demolition and new construction" approach. Its approach of old structures and adding new materials and systems offers the support for testing principles such as "recognizability" and "light intervention" proposed earlier.

At the same time, the Lianhua Academy project in Guangzhou is located in China and has the same cultural background as the case study. It helps to understand how these strategies work in the Chinese context, and where their limits and practical challenges may appear. It also adds useful ideas for heritage conservation in China.

By comparing these four cases, this study aims to test the applicability of the proposed strategies across different environments, cultural backgrounds, and intervention methods, and to provide stronger practical support for the final research conclusions.

3.2 Paralup_Italy

Original use: Residence

Current use: Accommodation / Commercial/ Art

Ownership: Private

Designer: Daniele Regis, Aldo and Giovanni Barberis Team

Time: 2008

Location: Cuneo, Italy

Source: <https://www.theplan.it/award-2017-Culture/recupero-della-borgata-paraloup-1>

Design context

The village of Paralup, located in the Province of Cuneo, sits at an altitude of 1360 meters. This small Alpine village is made up of stone houses and was long used as a seasonal mountain pasture.

During World War II, this remote village became a symbol of the Resistance and the birthplace of the Italian movement "Justice and Freedom." From autumn 1943 to spring 1944, it served as the first headquarters of the partisan group.

Over time, Paralup was completely abandoned. The buildings fell into ruin, and the memory nearly disappeared. In 2006, the Nuto Revelli Foundation purchased the site and started a revival project. It now preserves a double heritage — the history of the partisan struggle and the everyday life of mountain communities.



Image 14 Paralup After Restoration
Source: <https://paraloup.it/en/the-hamlet/>



Image 13 Paralup Before Restoration
Source: Photo by Daniele Regis

Image 15 Renovated buildings in the Paralup
Source: <https://www.theplan.it/award-2017-Culture/recupero-della-borgata-paraloup-1>



Restoration Strategies

Today, Paralup has been reborn as a sustainable community and a laboratory for cultural and social innovation. The core of its restoration strategy lies in respecting the memory of the site and promoting environmental regeneration. The restoration followed the concept of a "journey of memory," ensuring that interventions are recognizable, materials are authentic, and spaces remain complete. The project achieved a balance between the historic environment and contemporary architecture through careful interpretation of heritage values.

At the architectural level, the design preserved the original volumes, heights, and roof slopes, while clearly expressing the junctions between old and new. The existing exposed stone walls were cleaned and reinforced with fine lime mortar, maintaining the dry-stone character of the buildings. The new parts, made of local chestnut wood and lightweight galvanized steel, were inserted into the old walls. Roof insulation combines innovative materials with traditional techniques, using an ultra-thin aerospace insulating layer together with local wool. In terms of energy systems, PV panels and biomass heating were introduced, expressing a circular eco-friendly approach.

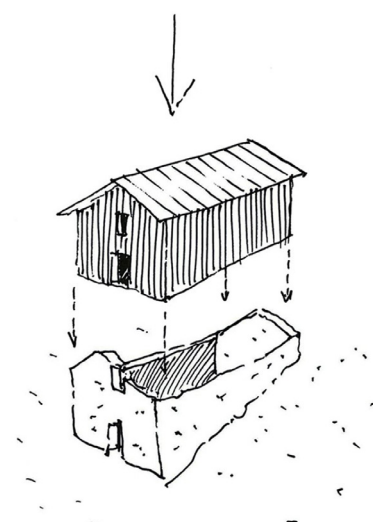


Image 16 Paralup Architectural Restoration Concept
Source: <https://www.theplan.it/award-2017-Culture/recupero-della-borgata-paraloup-1>

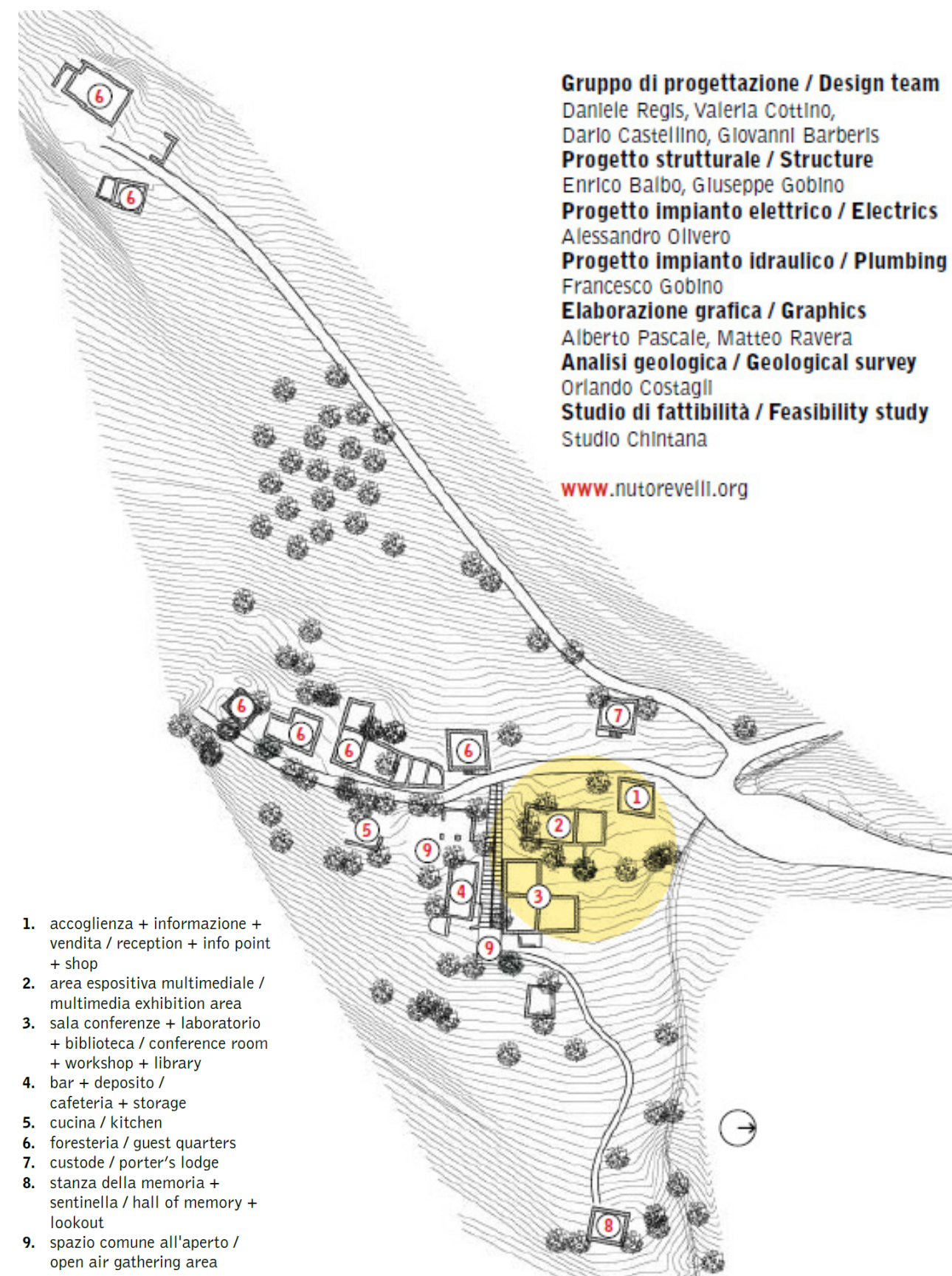


Image 17 Planimetry of Paralup
Source: <https://www.abitare.it>

The village has a diverse spaces, including a restaurant, community oven, exhibition space, library, open-air theater, and storytelling museum. The design reinforces the original settlement layout, preserving and restoring public areas like the walking trails and open-air theater, thus integrating the architecture with the surrounding environment.

Today, Palalup serves not only as a place for the preservation of memory but also as a stage for cultural and creative practice. The storytelling museum shows four key stages in the village's history from the 19th century to the present, chronicling migration, resistance, decline, and rebirth. The open-air theater serves as a space for artist residencies and performances.

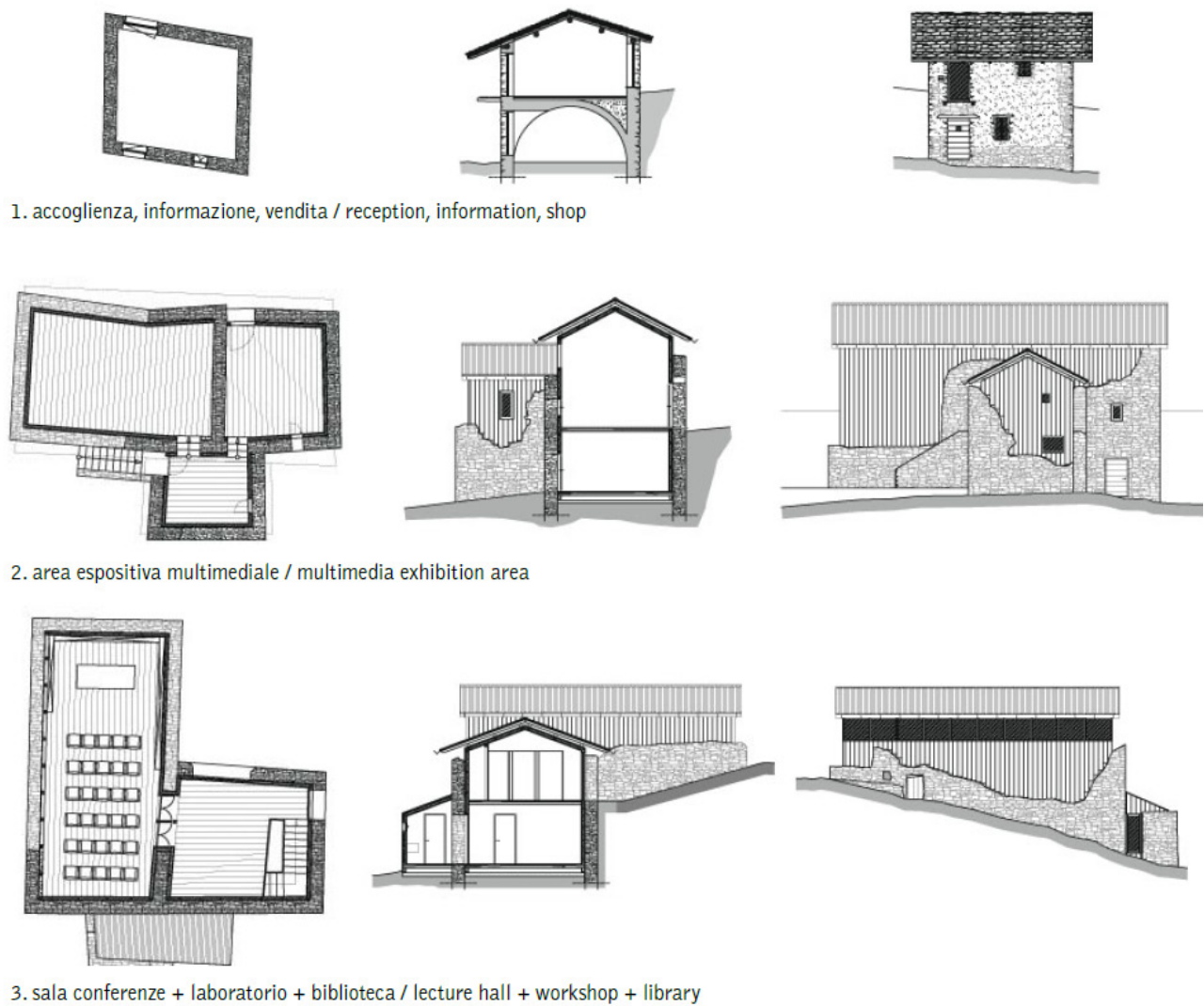


Image 18 Technical Drawings of Three Restored Huts
Source: <https://www.abitare.it>

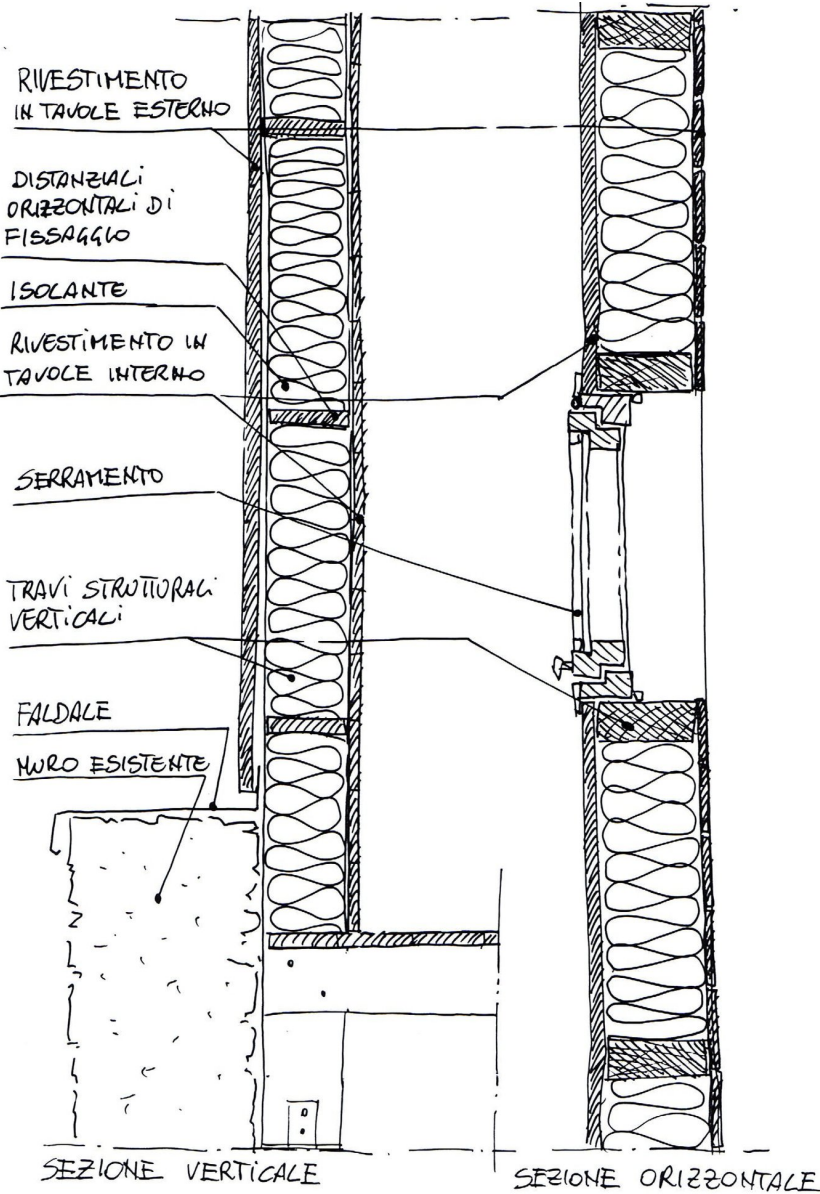


Image 20 Construction Details
Source: <https://www.theplan.it>

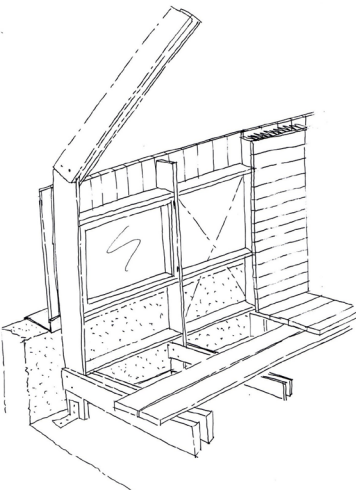


Image 19 Construction Diagram
Source: <https://www.theplan.it>



Image 21 Interior Photo
Source: <https://www.theplan.it>

3.3 Renovation of the Vrlovčnik Homestead_Slovenia

Original use: Farmhouse

Current use: Food & Accommodation

Ownership: Private

Designer: Medprostor

Time: 2017

Location: Logarska dolina 17, Matkov kot, Slovenia

Total area: 475 m²

Source: <https://medprostor.si/en/>

Design concept:

Abundance of natural and cultural heritage calls for a subtle intervention into the existing site; the renovation is, adding to its own program, aimed to contribute to the overall appeal of the site with the preservation of the region through respecting its identity. Inviting local contractors and reviving forgotten techniques whilst using local materials gives an added value to the renovation and addresses the social aspect of building regionally.



Image 22 Farmhouse Before Restoration

Source: <https://medprostor.si/en/>



Image 23 After Restoration Homestead

Source: <https://medprostor.si/en/>



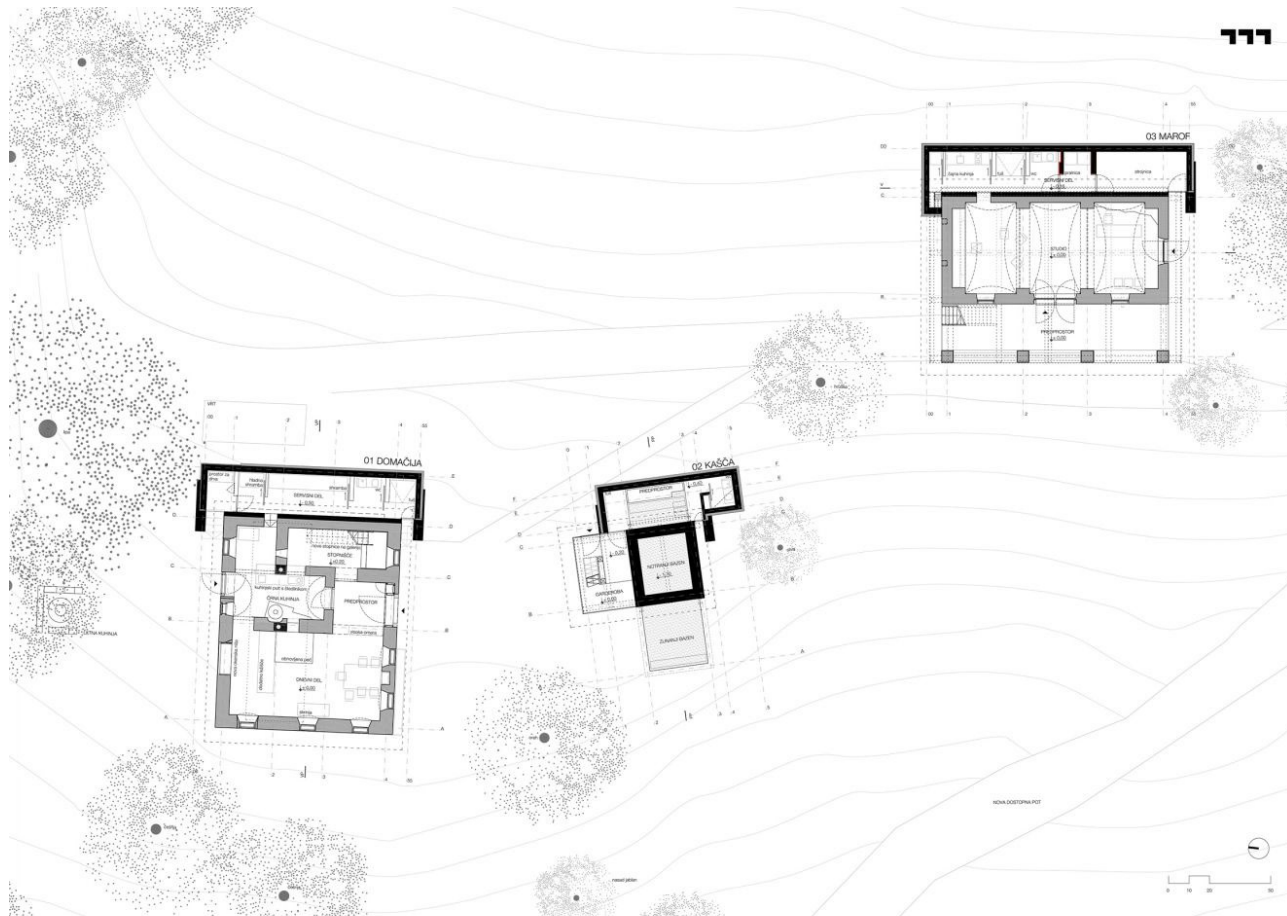
Image 24 Night Effect
Source: <https://medprostor.si/en/>



Image 25 Masterplan of Homestead
Source: <https://medprostor.si/en/>

The assemblage of objects consists of house, granary, marof (a double floor barn) and a smithy. Main, naturally reinforced access road leads up steeply from the valley; the historically used path led deeper from Matkov kot. Occupying the restored complex is to maintain the idea of the separation of functions, that occupy different houses and produce a unified dwelling. Former farming objects now house different separate living quarters. The path connecting them runs from the house pass the granary to the marof.

All of the existing structures were preserved and restored to house the new programs; Each building got a new service object that forms a boundary between the existing masonry and the terrain and forms a completed unit with the existing building. The exposed concrete surfaces of the objects were aggregated with the Solčava limestone, and have sanded finish on the ceiling and the walls, while the floors are brushed. The original windows and doors were renovated and restored as were the plasters, made with lime. The roofs are added onto the existing wooden structure, to keep it visible; they are covered in larch shingles.



777

3.4 Casa Clara. House Clara_Potugal

Original use: Residence

Current use: Accommodation

Ownership: Private

Designer: M2.senos – arquitectos/ Ricardo Senos e Sofia Senos

Time: 2024

Location: Costa Nova – Portugal

Total area: 176 m²

Source: <https://www.goood.cn/house-clara-by-m2-senos-arquitectos.htm>

Design concept:

Costa Nova do Prado, the Atlantic Portuguese beach, is famous for its “palheiros”, descendants of old storage buildings supporting fishing activities, which, over generations, became colorful striped houses, much to the delight of holidaymakers lucky enough to pass through.

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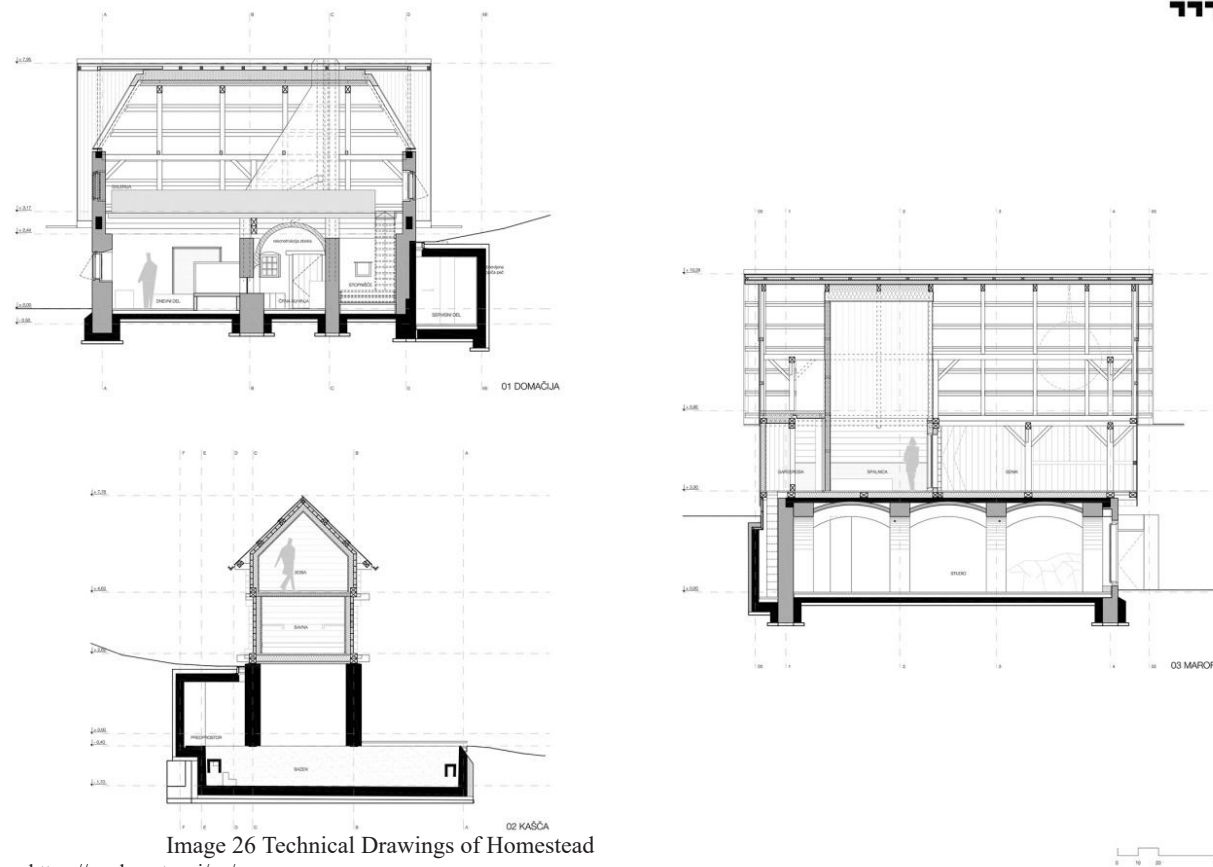


Image 26 Technical Drawings of Homestead

Source: <https://medprostor.si/en/>



Image 28 House Clara After Restoration

Source: <https://www.goood.cn/house-clara-by-m2-senos-arquitectos.htm>



Image 27 House Clara Before Restoration

Source: <https://www.goood.cn/house-clara-by-m2-senos-arquitectos.htm>

GROUND FLOOR PLAN
[planta térrea]

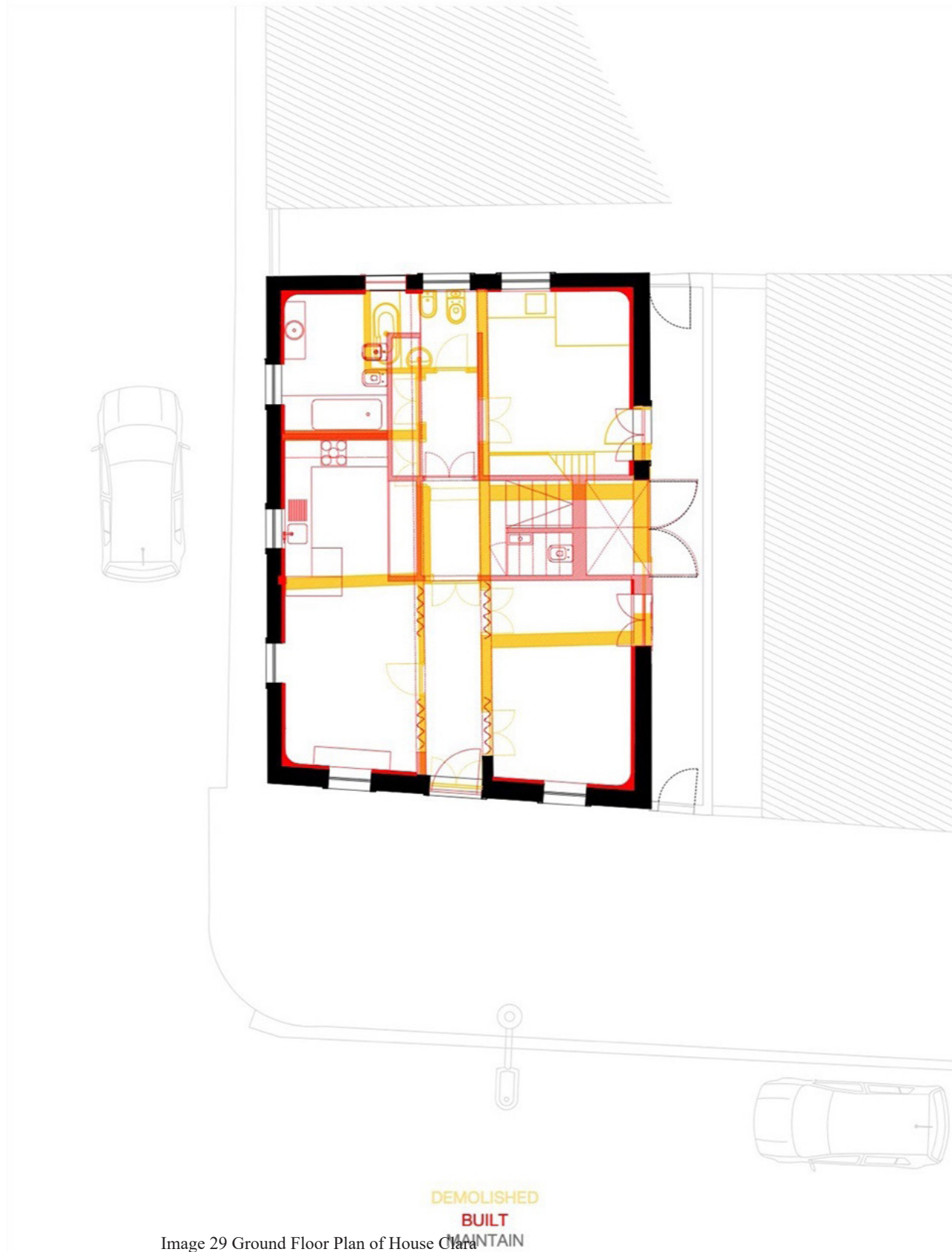


Image 29 Ground Floor Plan of House Clara

Source: <https://www.goood.cn/house-clara-by-m2-senos-arquitectos.htm>

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
[planta do 1º andar]

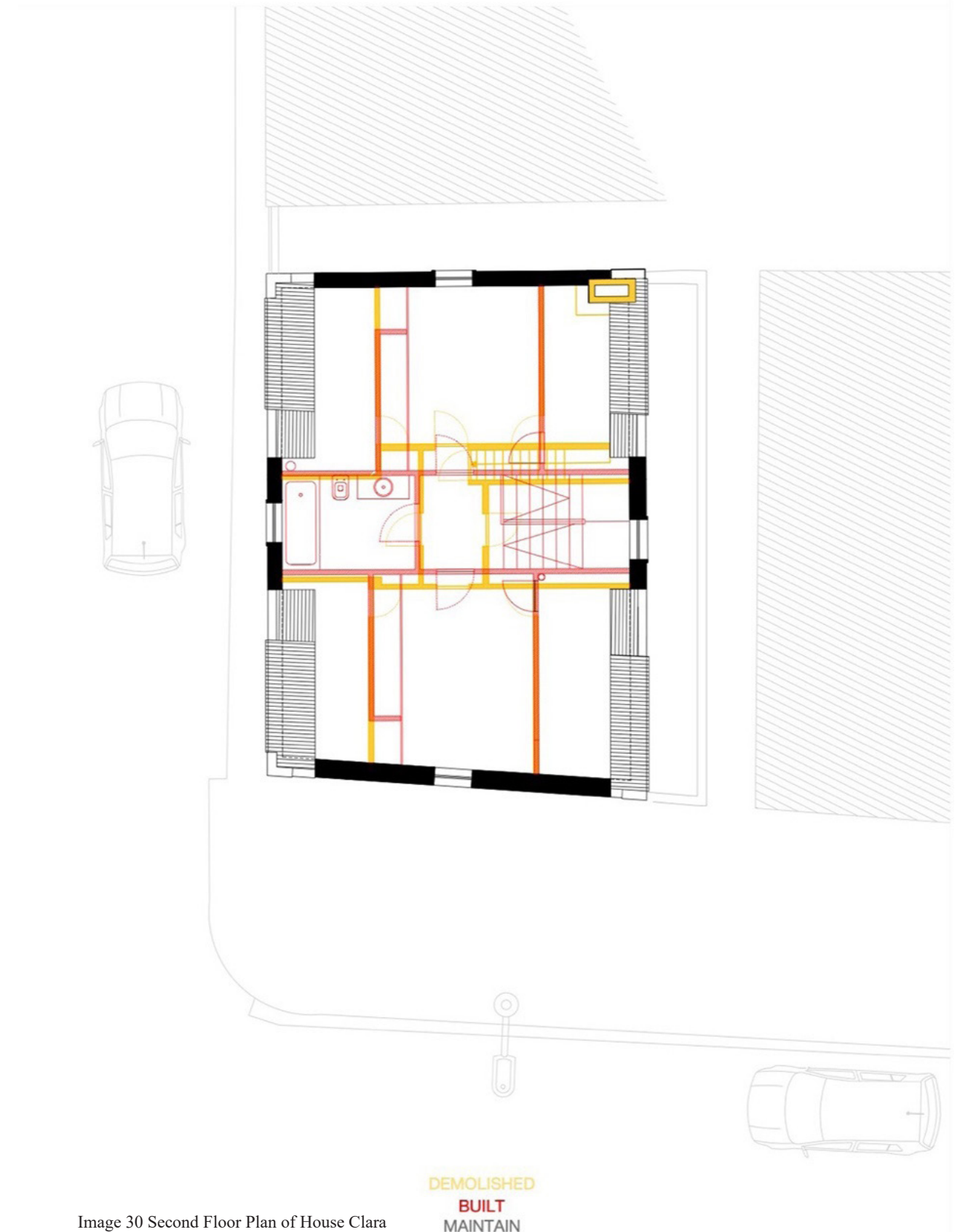


Image 30 Second Floor Plan of House Clara

Source: <https://www.goood.cn/house-clara-by-m2-senos-arquitectos.htm>

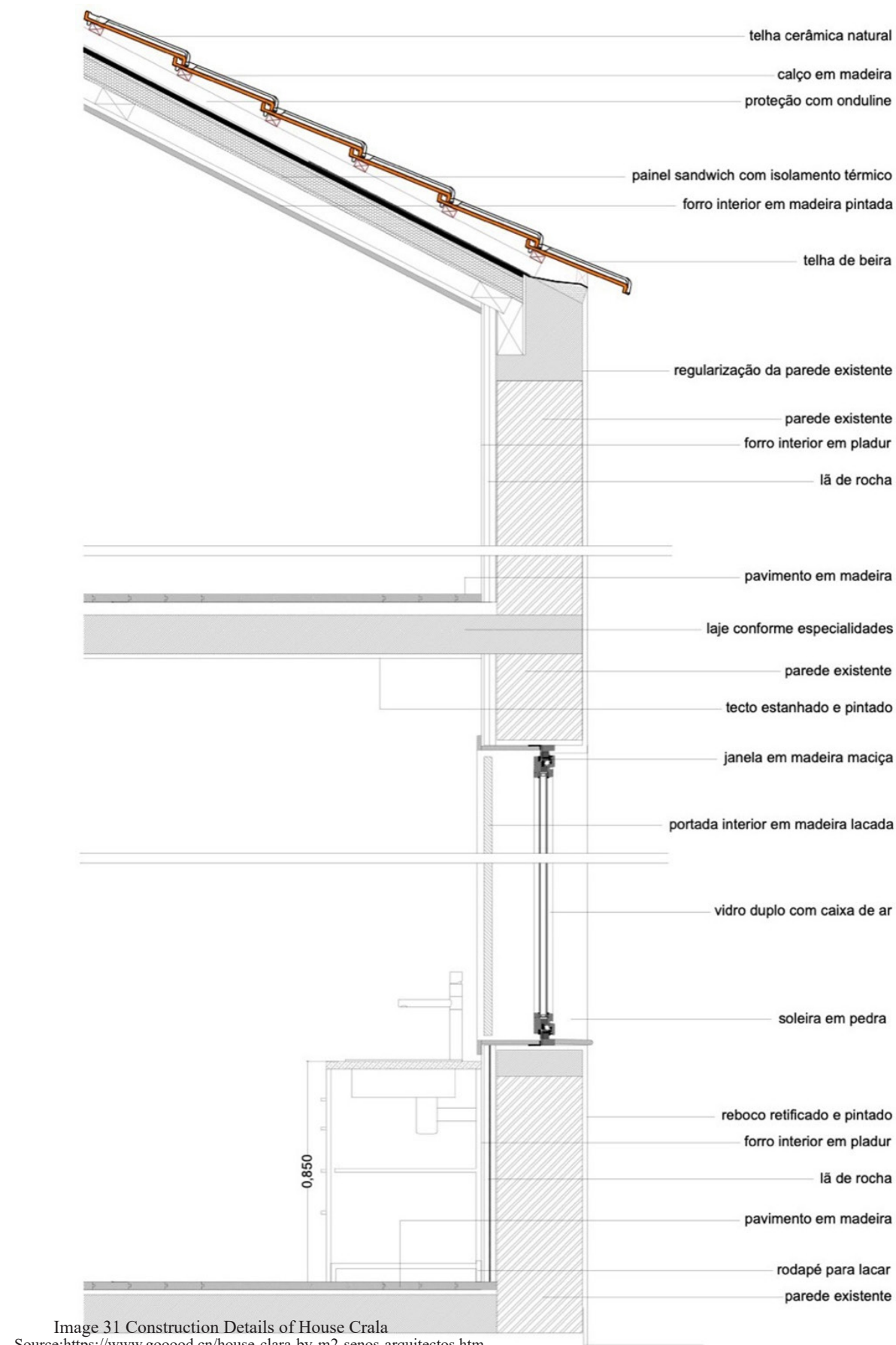


Image 31 Construction Details of House Crala
Source: <https://www.goood.cn/house-clara-by-m2-senos-arquitectos.htm>

3.5 Lianhua Academy in Guangzhou_China

Original use: Academy

Current use: Site Conservation and Interpretive Display

Ownership: Public

Designer: Urban Elephant Studio

Time: 2021

Location: Guangzhou, China

Total area: 1818.04 m²

Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>

Located at the foot of Nanxiang Mountain in Zengcheng District, Guangzhou, Lianhua Academy was originally the place where the Ming scholar Zhan Ruoshui lectured. Over the centuries, the original buildings have disappeared, leaving only the foundations and traces of the site.

With urban expansion, the original site is now surrounded on the edge of new urban development. This project, collaborated between the architects and the local government, aims to provide residents with new public spaces while preserving cultural memory.



Image 32 Academy Status in 2018
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>

Restoration Strategies

Space and Path

The design focuses on "reconstructing the spirit rather than restoring the form". It preserves the traditional relationship between the site, the mountain, and the water, while creating opportunities for modern public use. Through a "light intervention" approach, the architects used bamboo, wood, and concrete to create layered platforms and walkways that reorganize the natural terrain, site remains, and pedestrian circulation.



Image 33 Aerial view of the renewed site
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>

Order of the Platforms

The site is divided into five levels of platforms, each carrying a distinct narrative function.



Image 34 Masterplan of Lianhua Academy
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>

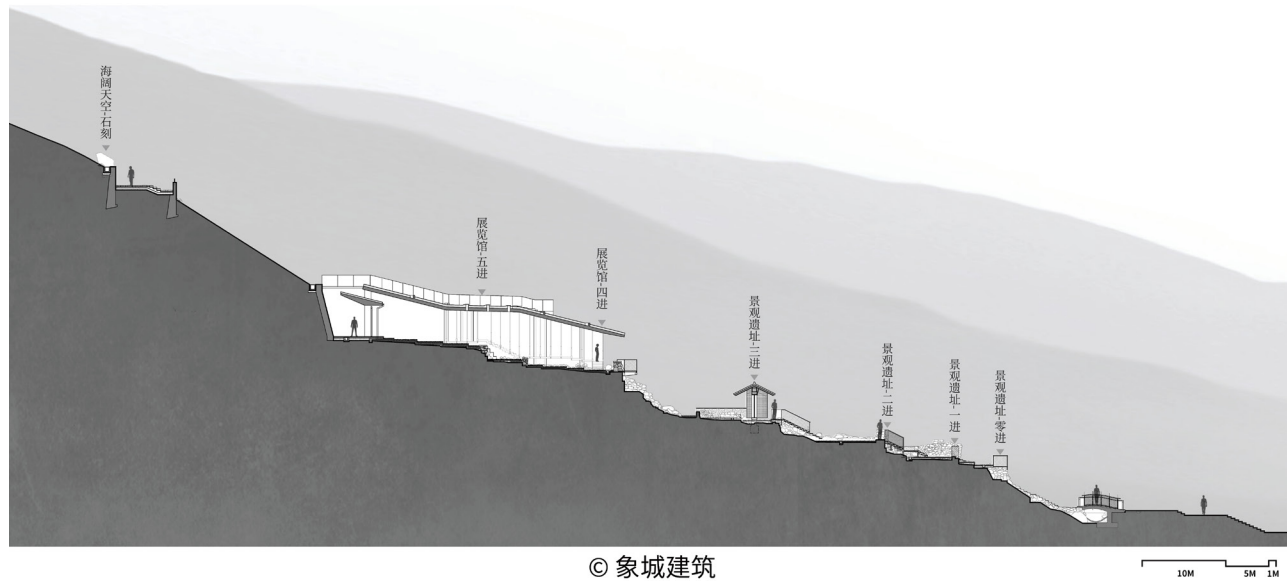
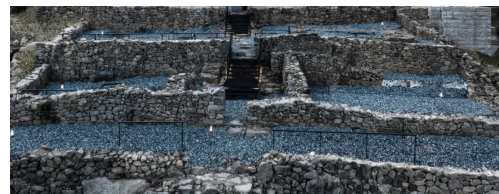


Image 35 The section of Lianhua Academy
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>

The first and second platforms show few traces of human activity, so the design transforms the former archaeological trenches into drainage channels, with only subtle metal markers indicating the scattered remains.

Image 36 The first and second platforms
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>



The third platform contains mixed information, but based on historical records, it is suggested to be the official entrance to the academy. Therefore, the design team introduced a small steel gate pavilion to evoke the historical scene, while the newly added retaining wall beside it creates a dialogue between the contemporary intervention and the ancient stone foundation.

Image 37 The third platform
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>



The fourth and fifth platforms form the core of the site. Faced with a complete but low foundation, the design team chose not to reconstruct the original buildings. Instead, they avoided placing new walls over the ruins and used a scattered columns for the ceiling. The oval columns, oriented in two directions, hinted at the original building volume while weakened the sense of individual bays. The ceiling was covered with a 1×1 meter grid pre-embedded system to facilitate the suspension of walkways that float above the site.

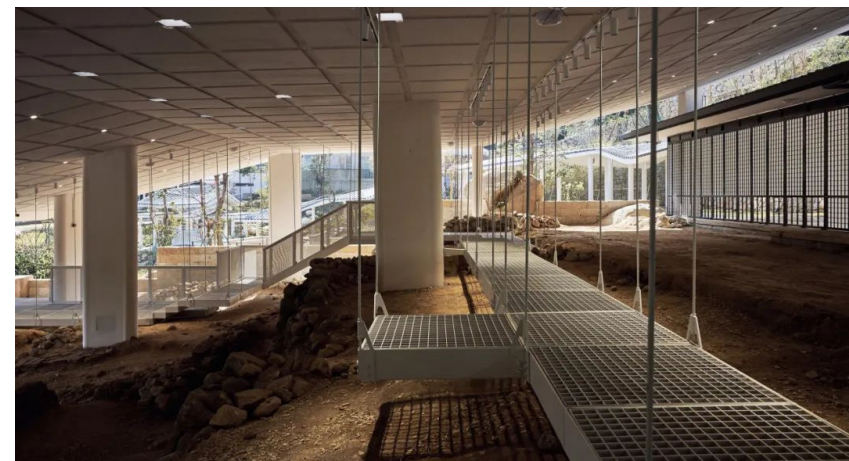


Image 38 The fourth and fifth platform
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>



Image 39 The embodiment of old and new materials
Source: <https://labued.com/productinfo/991321.html>

3.6 Summary

Although these four cases are very different in terms of region, they all reflect the value of everyday heritage. They emphasize lifestyle, local crafts, spatial memory and resident participation, rather than just the preservation of form. They emphasize the following restoration strategies for reference.

- Introduce urban memory display nodes
- Encourage community participation and enhance daily culture
- Establish local craft training bases and transform them into cultural production sites
- Combining micro-agricultural experience with accommodation
- Establish traditional life restoration blocks
- Regulate development boundaries and set up a "indigenous residents-visitors coexistence" mechanism

Project	Everyday Heritage Performance	Restoration Concept	Technology Strategies
Paralup	The revival of Paralup preserves both the memory of the WWII partisan movement and the everyday life of Alpine communities.	Material Authenticity/ Created a storytelling museum/ Environment regeneration and circular system	Add aluminum structure/ Retain stone walls/ Restore wooden doors and windows
Vrlovčnik Homestead	Retain the original functional divisions (main house, barn, forge) and recreate the traditional residential model of "functional separation." Use local materials and techniques.	Adhering to the concepts of "site restoration" and "cultural ecology protection," emphasis is placed on systematic restoration.	Original components retained/ plaster restored/ new service blocks hidden in the terrain
Casa Clara	The evolution of "Palheiros" reflects the integration of fishing economy and leisure life, and the stripes on the facades constitute an important part of the local visual heritage.	Create a "cognitive memory" field to show the inheritance of local culture.	Partial structural update/ retain traditional shape
Guangzhou Lianhua Academy	Through the reconstruction of space and pathways, residents can rediscover traditional cultural life through strolling and resting.	The platform reorganizes the terrain and ruins according to "narrative hierarchy". Suspended walkways reduce physical contact with the site. Contemporary structural expression.	Reconstruct the spirit, not the physical form./Adopt lightweight interventions./Use platforms to structure narrative and

Image 40 Comparison of Reference Case Study
Draw by Author



4. The Liyuanba Village

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Village Context
- 4.3 Introduction to Selected Building
- 4.4 Survey of Selected Building
- 4.5 Construction Element of Selected Facade
- 4.6 Conclusion of Problems

4.1 Introduction

During my bachelor's degree, I first visited Liyuanba Village. At that time, I selected a traditional dwelling in the village for renovation design. However, because of a lack of systematic study of architectural restoration, my understanding of the historical value, construction methods, and daily use of the building was limited, and the design mainly meet the spatial requirement. This experience, though immature, made me realize that the renewal of traditional buildings requires not only design skills but also a deep understanding of its cultural background and daily life logic. For this reason, in my master's degree, I decided to focus on architectural restoration. I hoped to rebuild my understanding of Liyuanba Village with a more complete knowledge system and provide more reliable methods for its future protection and renewal.



Image 41 Current status of the house (2020)
Photo by Author

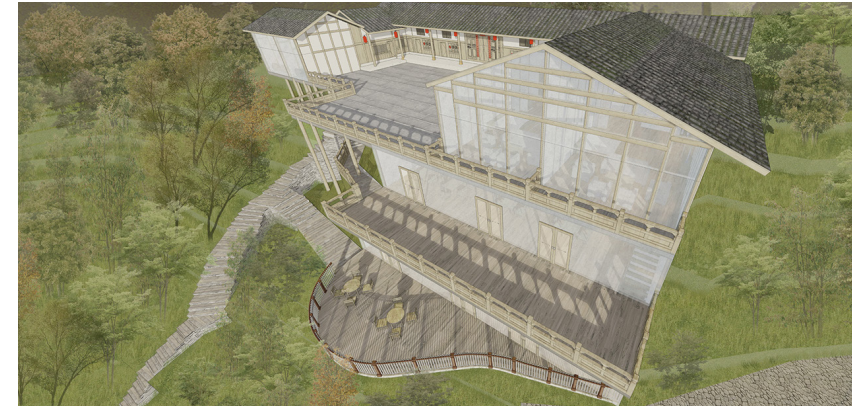


Image 42 Design Proposal in
Bachelor's Degree
Draw by Author

Liyuanba Village has a special feature in the current context of rural development in China. On the one hand, it is included in national-level policy planning and is a key traditional village under the rural revitalization framework. This gives the village clear development direction and policy support. On the other hand, the village has rich history, culture, and daily practices. It keeps wooden-structure settlement forms, oral traditions, and living skills, and it also has a unique courtyard type found only in Sichuan. Because of this, Liyuanba shows both official heritage and everyday heritage. It receives institutional support through policy attention, but the daily memories and local culture it carries go beyond official categories.



Image 43 Physical Model
Made by Author

In China's rural renewal practices, there is policy-driven, top-down planning. While this improves infrastructure and the overall environment, it may also weaken the role of local life logic in architectural restoration. Therefore, using the everyday heritage perspective to re-examine the village is important. Only in this way can architectural protection and village renewal form a more sustainable path.

For this reason, this chapter begins with the village as a whole. It provides a full overview of Liyuanba's geographical layout, historical development, architectural features, and the spatial characteristics of the selected dwelling. This analysis forms the foundation for later discussions on restoration strategies and design proposals. It is both a re-understanding of everyday heritage values and an effort to revisit the village from a more professional perspective shaped by my personal experience.

4.2 Village Context

4.2.1 Territorial Framework of Village

Located in the northwestern sector of Nixi Township, Tongjiang County, Bazhong City, the village lies within the eastern mountainous region of Sichuan Province, characterized by its position in the peripheral mountainous zone of the Sichuan Basin and the Daba Mountain range. Spanning 25.8 square kilometers, the settlement is situated at coordinates 32°14'N, 107°22'E, with elevations ranging between 500 and 800 meters. The traditional village of Liyuanba is currently accessible via a village-level highway.



Image 44 Site Location in National Context
Draw by Author

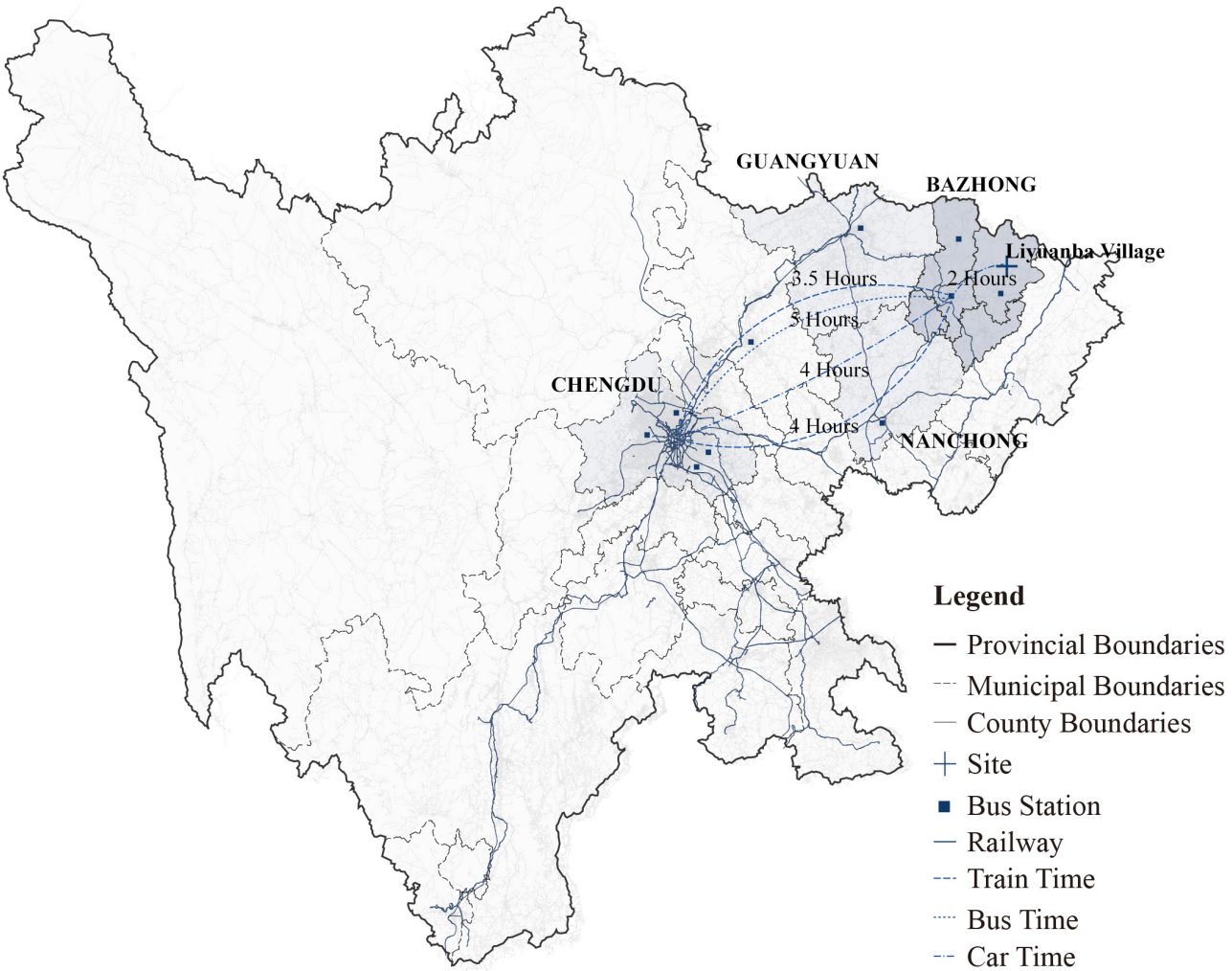


Image 45 Transportation to Liyuanba Village
Draw by Author

Liyuanba is located in a remote area, and the transportation to the outside world is relatively inconvenient. People can reach the town through the bus station in Chengdu or other surrounding cities, and then take a car to the town.

Topographically, Liyuanba features a mountainous terrain enclosed by ranges on all sides, bordered by water bodies to the east, and centered around a narrow alluvial plain. Nixi Township is bisected by the Datongjiang River, which meanders in an S-shaped course through its central section. The village itself contains an intricate hydrological network, including the Longwangyegou mountain spring on the northern highland. This perennial spring converges into a stream that traverses the settlement, serving as the primary potable water source for residents. Adjacent to the village, the Majia River—a minor Taiji-shaped water system—irrigates and nourishes the surrounding agricultural lands, connected by a Ming Dynasty stone slab bridge.



Image 46 Ming Dynasty Stone Bridge
Source: <https://main.dmctv.com.cn/villages/>

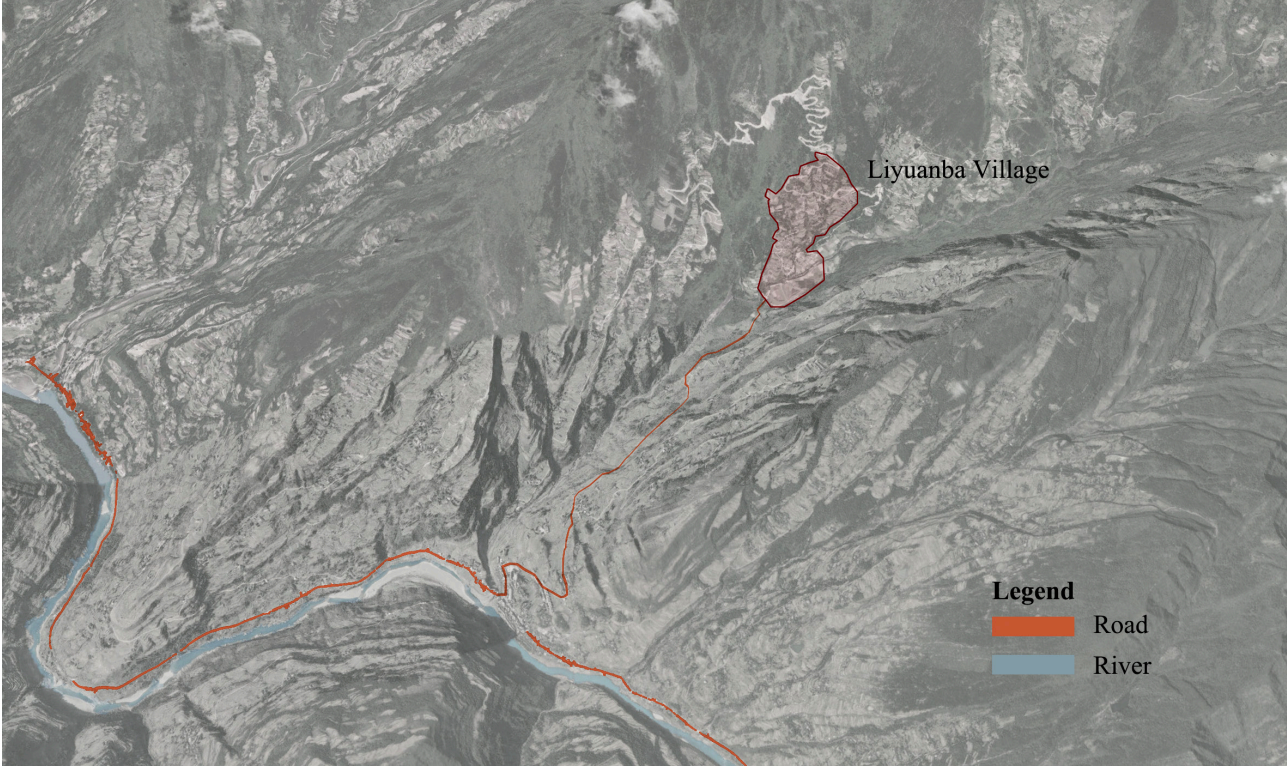


Image 47 Village 3D topographic map
Draw by Author



Image 48 Aerial view of the village
Source: <https://main.dmctv.com.cn/villages/>

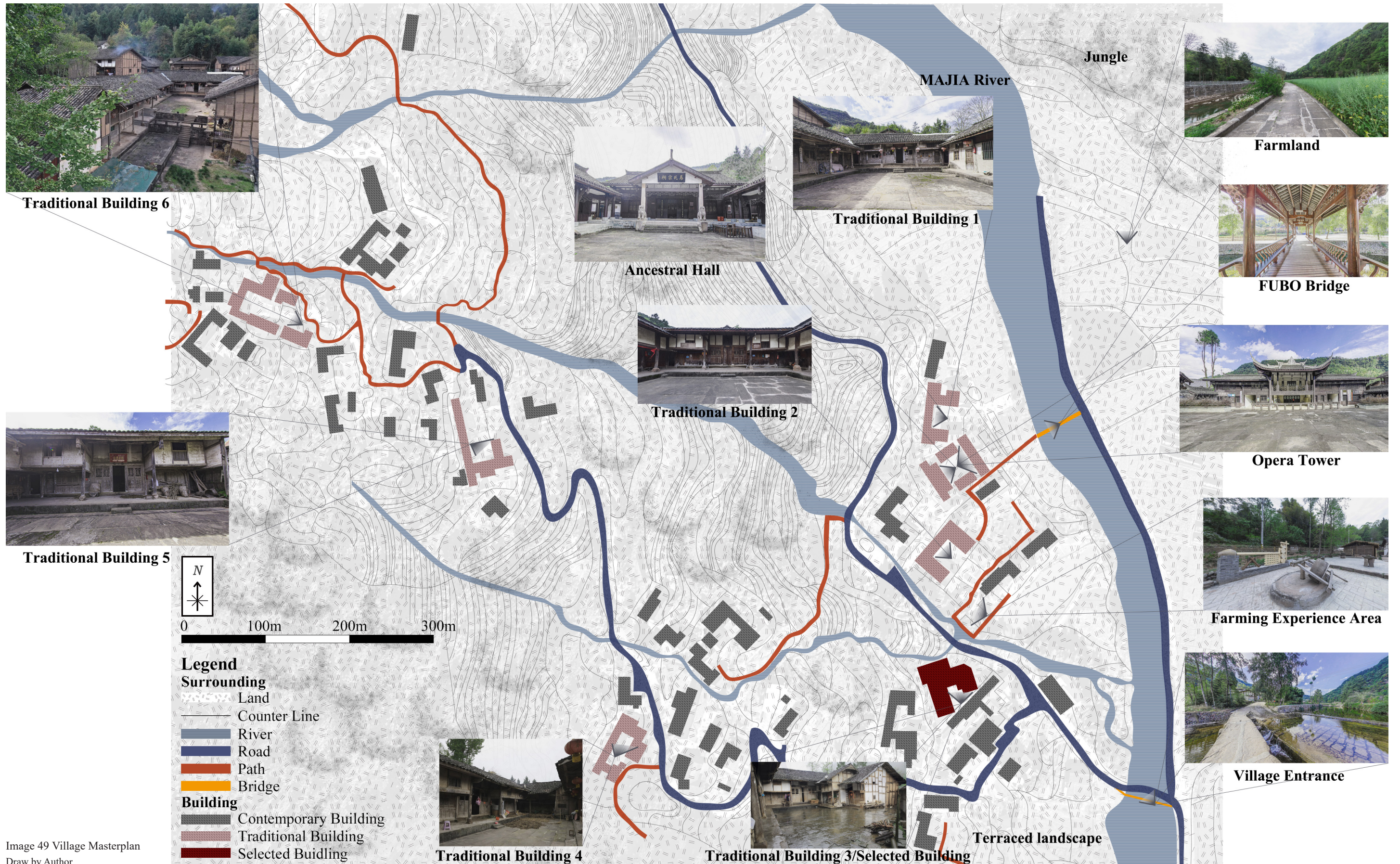


Image 49 Village Masterplan
Draw by Author

The architectural fabric of Liyuanba Village demonstrates exceptional adaptation to mountainous topography, with nearly all dwellings constructed in the vernacular style of column-and-tie timber framing, featuring slate-gray tiled roofs and lime-washed walls. Adapting to the undulating terrain through a terraced foundation system, residences cascade across multiple leveled platforms along gentle slopes, achieving organic integration with the natural environment. This settlement pattern embodies the traditional architectural philosophy prioritizing harmony between built forms and landscape ecology.



Image 50 Village Scenery
Source: Traditional Chinese Village Digital Museum <https://www.dmctv.cn/>

4.2.2 Historical Framework of village

1. Origin of the village

Liyuanba village boasts a profound historical legacy documented in the Ma Clan Genealogical Stele from Fufeng Prefecture. According to this archival record, the settlement traces its origins to Ma Qingqian, a native of Macheng County in De'an Prefecture (present-day Hubei Province), who served as the Prefect of Shunqing Prefecture in Sichuan before establishing his ancestral estate in Longsheba, Tongjiang County of Baoning Prefecture during the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties (around 14th century). Motivated by political considerations, the Ma clan ancestors migrated to Sichuan through official transfers and eventually settled in this area, forming a clan-based community. Since Ma Qingqian's initial settlement, the lineage has persisted for over six centuries.^[1]

1. Liyuanba Village Chronicles

The General Hospital of the Red Fourth Front Army was established in December 1932 at Liyuanba within Nixi Township. It underwent multiple relocations: first to Zhuzikan in March 1933, followed by another transfer in May, until its fifth relocation to Wangping in January 1934.

2. Administrative Transformations

Administrative transformations unfolded through modern state-building processes. In 1952, Nixi Township was abolished and reorganized into Liyuan Township under the Sixth District (Yong'an District). Following administrative reorganization in 1955 that merged smaller townships, Liyuan Township was incorporated into Nixi Township. This configuration was revised in 1957 with the reinstatement of Liyuan Township. The People's Commune system implemented in 1958 absorbed Liyuan Township into Nixi Commune. Subsequent reform in 1984 replaced production brigades with village administrations, establishing Liyuanba Village under Nixi Town within Yong'an District.

3.Current Situation

Demographically, the village maintains a registered population of 1,155 residents with 850 permanent inhabitants, sustaining traditional agrarian livelihoods through grain cultivation and poultry husbandry. Its historical significance received national recognition through inclusion in China's Third Batch of Traditional Villages (2014), affirming its status as a living repository of regional settlement patterns and revolutionary heritage.

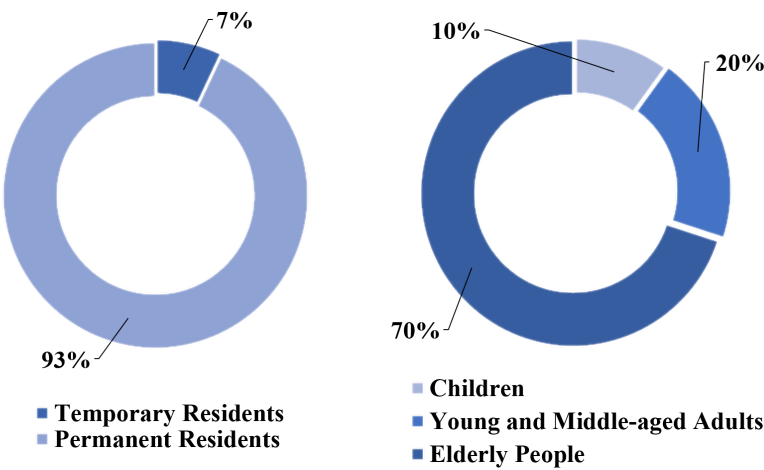


Image 51 Population Analysis
Draw by Author
Source: Villagers' oral account

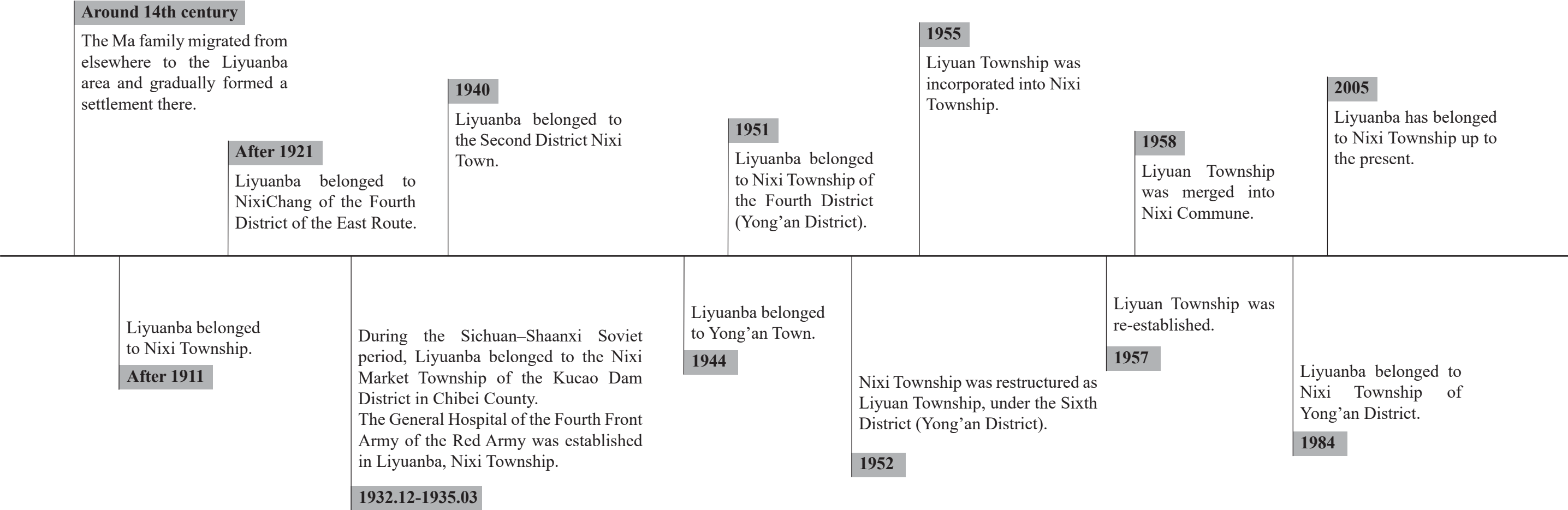


Image 52 Chronology
Draw by Author

4.2.3 Climate Analysis

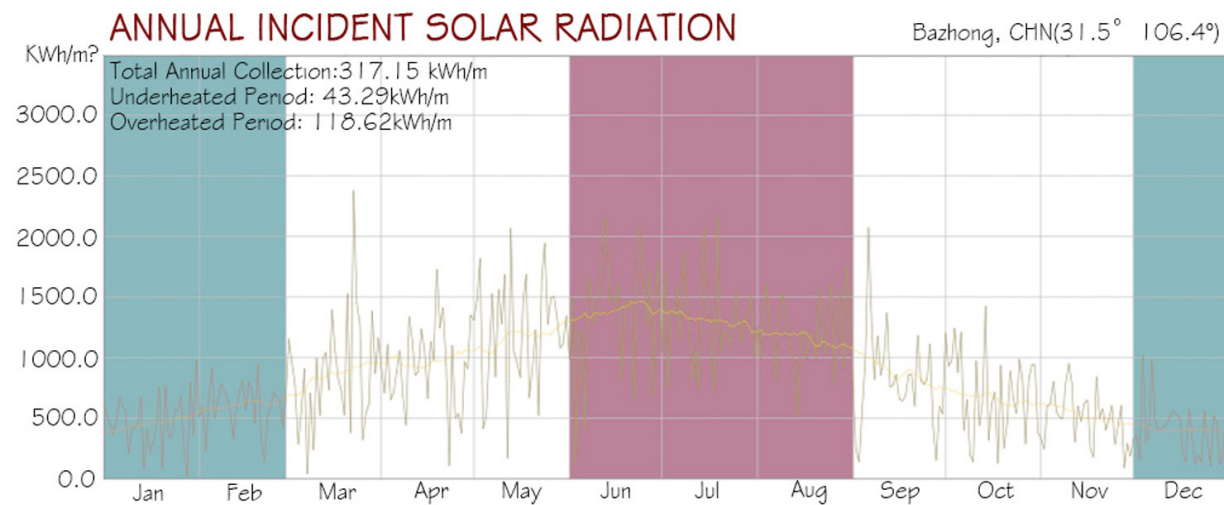


Image 53 Solar Radiation Analysis
Source: Weather Spark

Prevailing Winds

Wind Frequency (Hrs)
Location: Ba-
zhong, CHN(31.5° 106.3°)
Date: 1st January - 30th December
Time: 00:00 - 24:00
Weather Manager

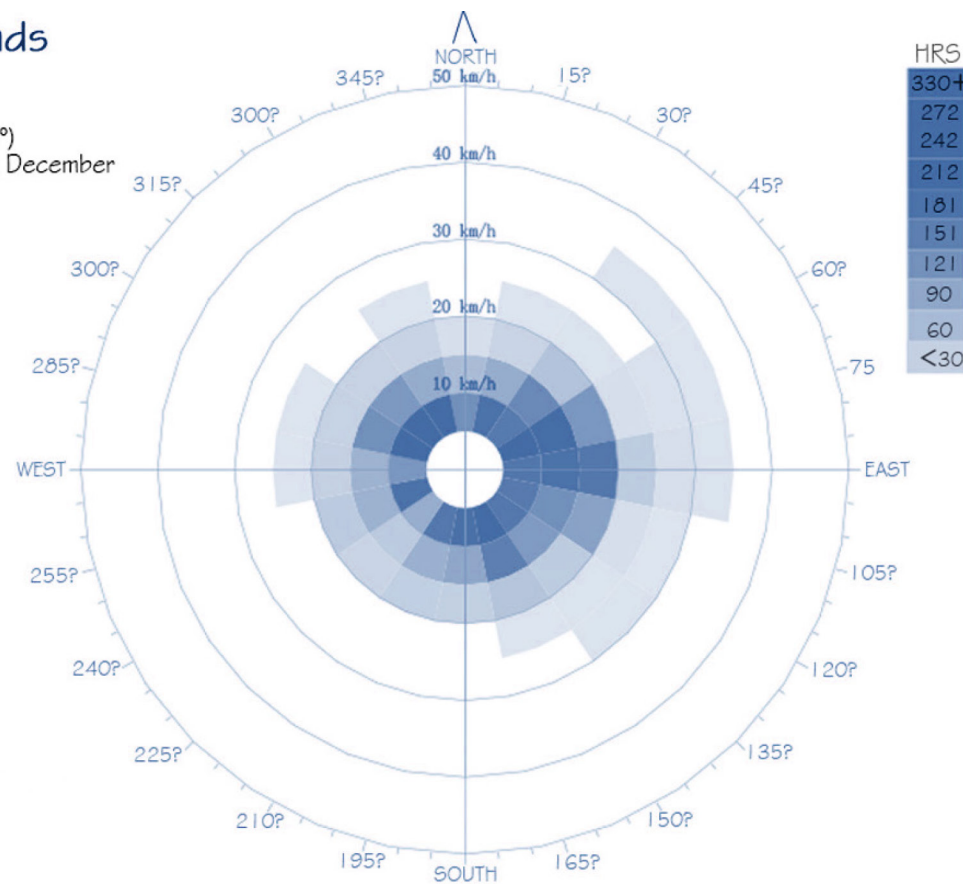


Image 54 Wind Analysis
Source: Weather Spark

Optimum Orientation

Location: Bazhong, CHN
Orientation based on average daily incident radiation on a vertical surface.
Underheated Stress: 936.7
Overheated Stress: 176.9
Compromise: 207.5
Weather Tool

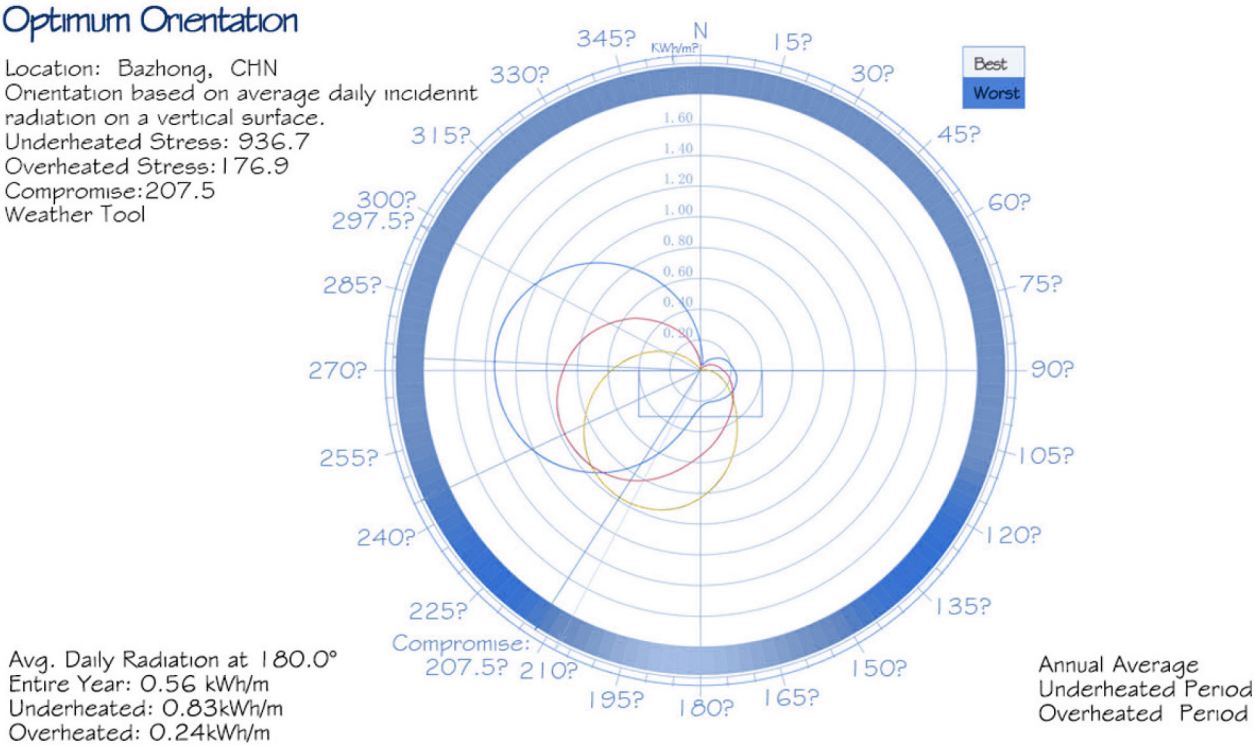


Image 55 Orientation Analysis
Source: Weather Spark

Solar radiation in the region shows strong seasonal variation: it is very low in winter and relatively high in summer. Therefore, building design should first address the problem of insufficient winter heating. This can be improved by optimizing building orientation and designing the building envelope to increase winter heat gain, while using simple shading methods in summer to reduce overheating.

The dominant wind direction throughout the year is from the southeast to the south, and overall wind speed is low (mostly 0–10 km/h). Because natural ventilation potential is limited but the wind direction is stable, major operable windows should be placed on the south and southeast sides to improve ventilation efficiency.

Analysis of annual solar radiation on exterior walls of different orientations shows that insufficient winter heating is the main challenge. Therefore, the main facade for daylighting should be oriented at about 207.5° (south-southwest) to maximize winter sunlight and reduce summer overheating.

4.2.3 Folk Culture

Folk Song

"Liyuan Folk Song" is an intangible cultural heritage item at the county level in Tongjiang. These songs have a long history and a strong connection to local life. They are performed in an original form by villagers, without any artistic modification or refinement.

Food Culture

Vegetable Tofu is a traditional dish commonly served to guests in Liyuanba families. It combines tofu with green vegetables, resulting in a fine texture and pure white color. Rich in protein, it has a light, refreshing taste with a pleasant sour aroma. The main ingredient is soybeans, which are soaked, ground into soy milk, filtered, and boiled. Sour vegetable broth is then added to curdle the tofu, which is later pressed into blocks.



Image 56 Vegetable Tofu
Source: Traditional Chinese Village
Digital Museum <https://www.dmctv.cn/>

Steamed corncake (*shuimomo*) is one of the most popular local snacks. It is a traditional village delicacy made from fresh corn. The best time to make it is in mid to late July, when the local corn ripens.

Wood Carving

Wood carving is a traditional local art. In Liyuanba Village, many old courtyard houses feature finely carved wooden window lattices. The carvings often depict rich folk themes related to nature, good fortune, longevity and happiness.



Image 57 Wood Carving
Source: Traditional Chinese Village
Digital Museum <https://www.dmctv.cn/>

Bamboo Weaving

Liyuanba is rich in bamboo, and locals have learned to use local resource. They split bamboo into strips and weave it together to create farm tools. The owner of the house is good at this.



Image 58 Bamboo Weaving
Source: Photographed by the author

4.2.4 Architectural Form of Village

Architecturally, Liyuanba's dwellings exemplify pragmatic responses to geomorphic constraints. Though deviating from formal symmetry and standardized construction norms, their low-profile designs optimize solar exposure through extended daylight cycles. This settlement configuration reflects the geomantic wisdom of the Ma clan ancestors in selecting an auspicious site that harmonizes survival necessities, productive capacities, and ecological advantages – a testament to traditional Chinese site selection principles integrating practical livelihood considerations with cosmological alignment.

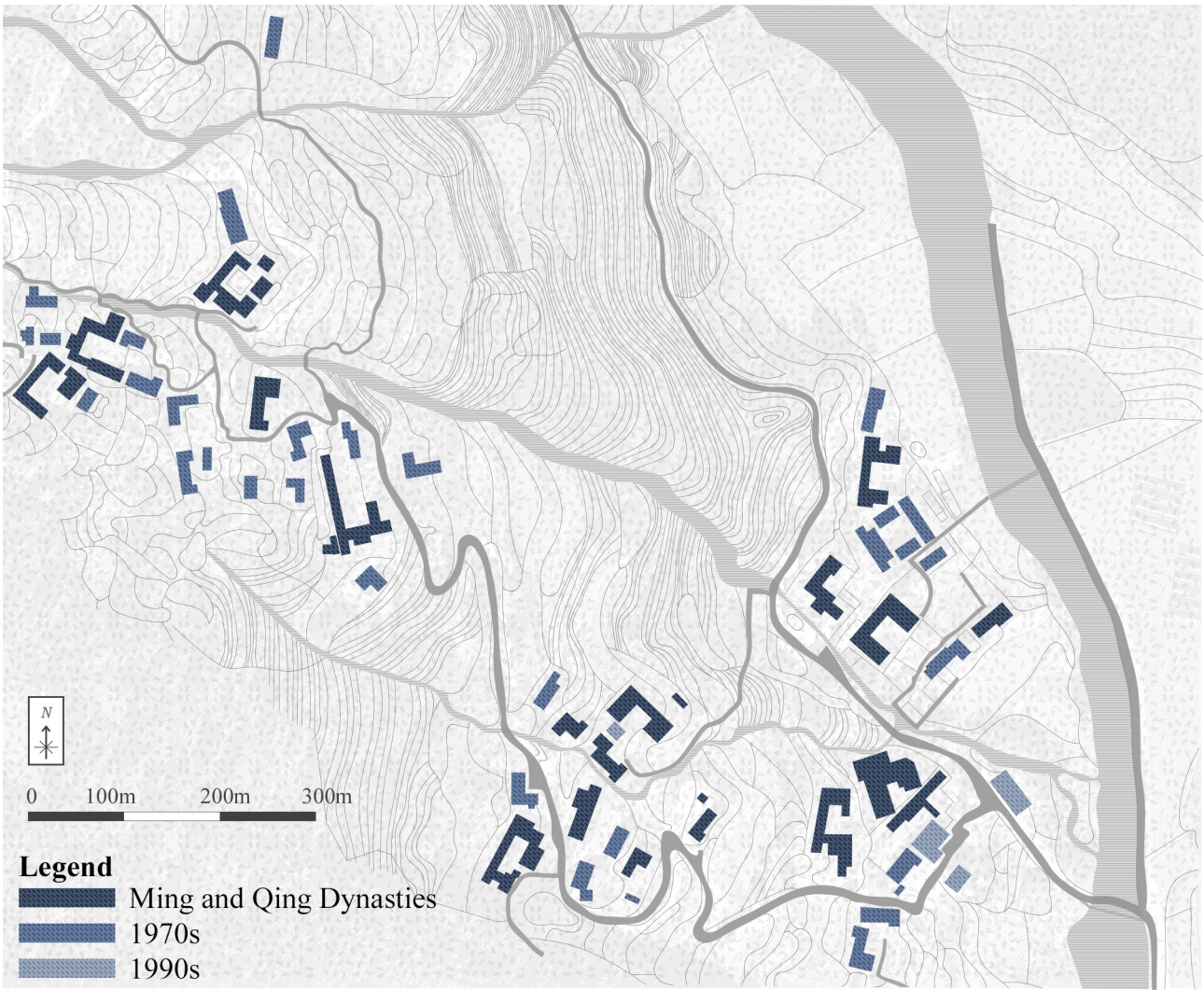


Image 59 Building Age Classification
Draw by Author
Source: Chinese Traditional Village Digital Museum

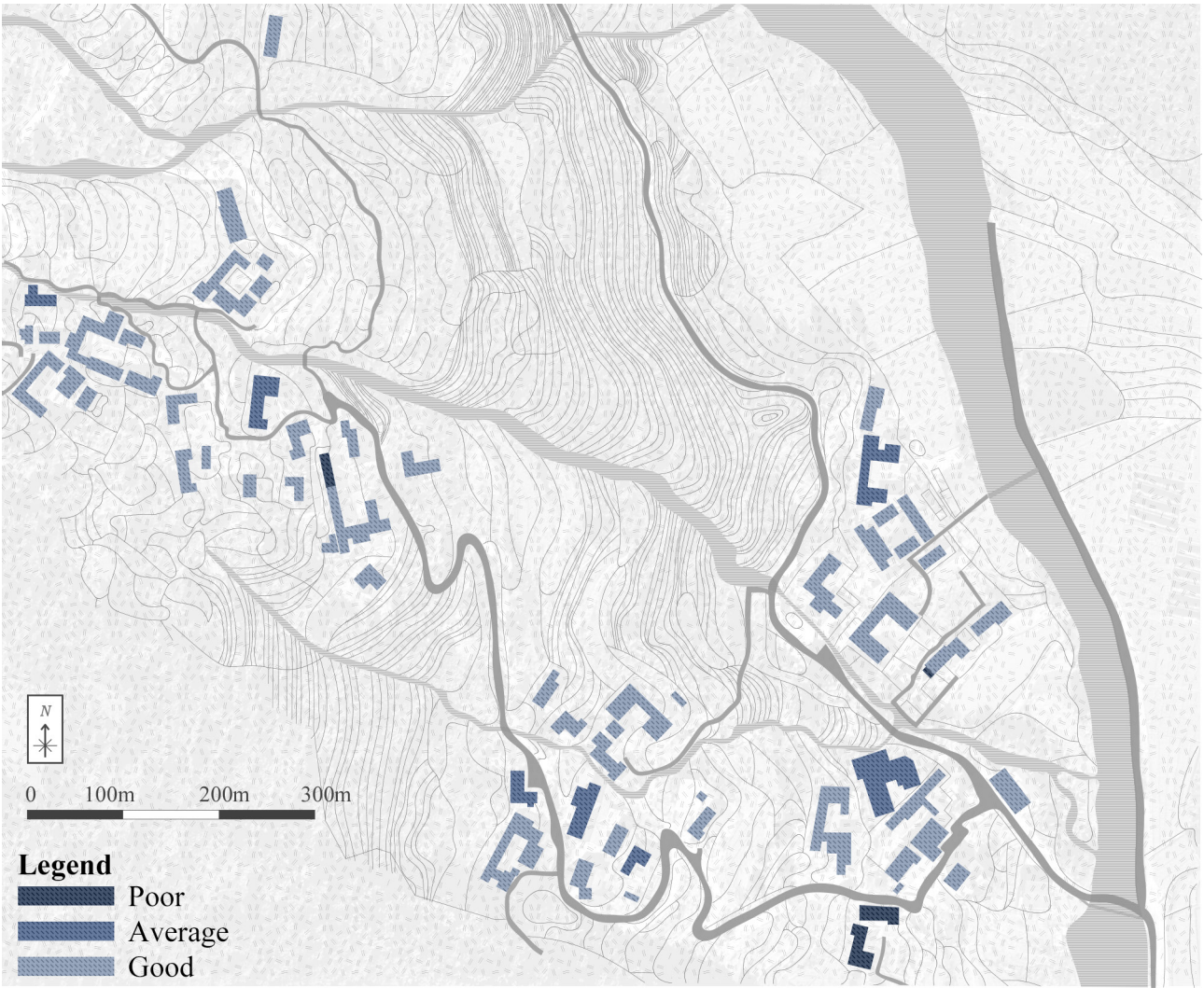


Image 60 Building Quality Classification
Draw by Author
Source: Chinese Traditional Village Digital Museum

Remarkably intact preservation distinguishes Liyuanba, with only four modern brick-concrete structures. The village preserves 58 surviving examples of northeastern Sichuan-style timber-frame dwellings, including 28 Ming-Qing era specimens. These structures, strategically distributed across forested slopes, exhibit sophisticated craftsmanship and regional typological diversity. Agricultural cultural symbols remain ubiquitously embedded in the built environment, constituting an intact repository of folk architectural heritage.

Image 61 Good Quality Building
Sample
Photo by Author (2020)



Image 62 Average Quality Building
Sample
Photo by Author (2020)



Image 63 Poor Quality Building
Sample
Photo by Author (2020)

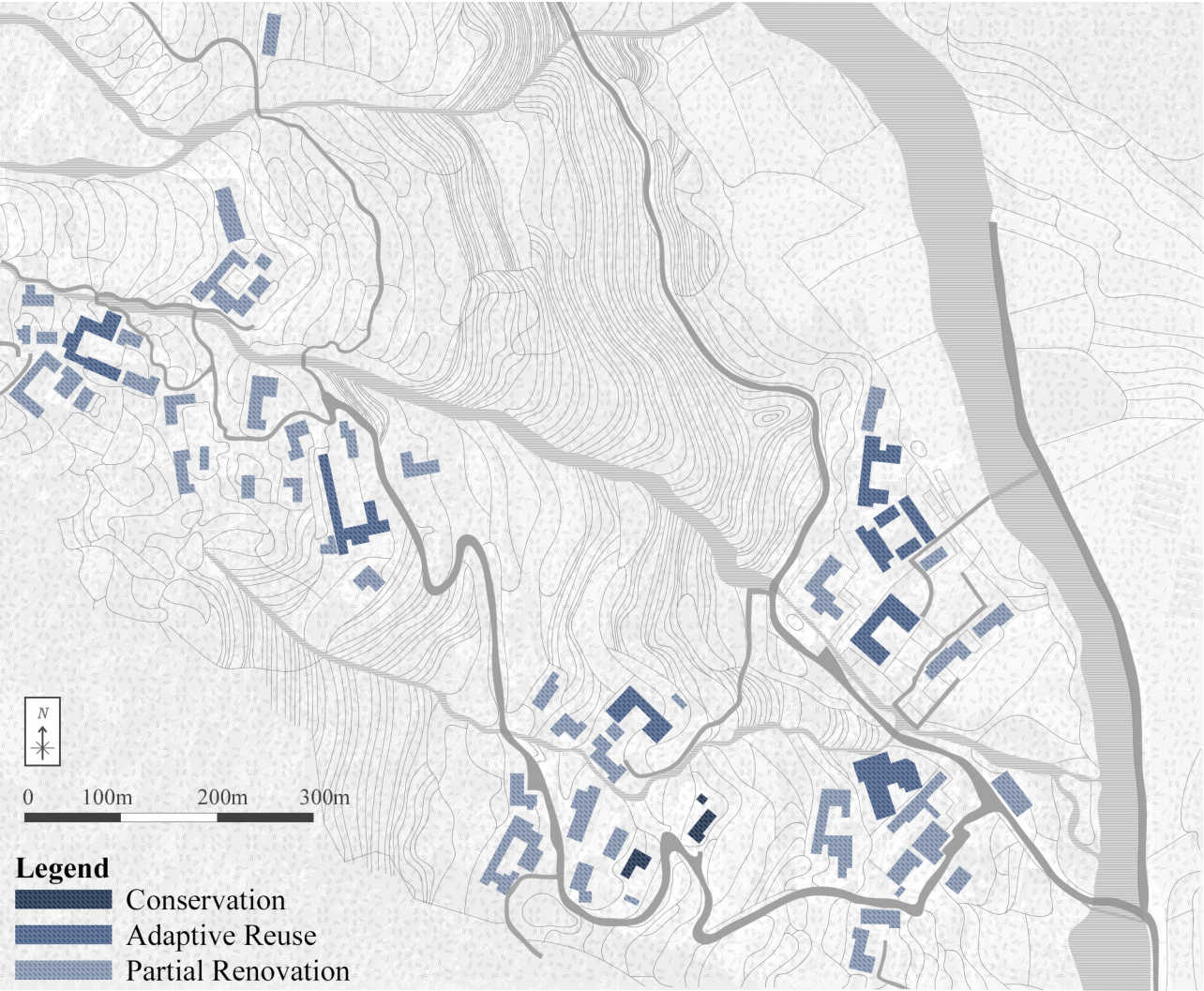


Image 64 Building Protection Level
Draw by Author

Source: Chinese Traditional Village Digital Museum

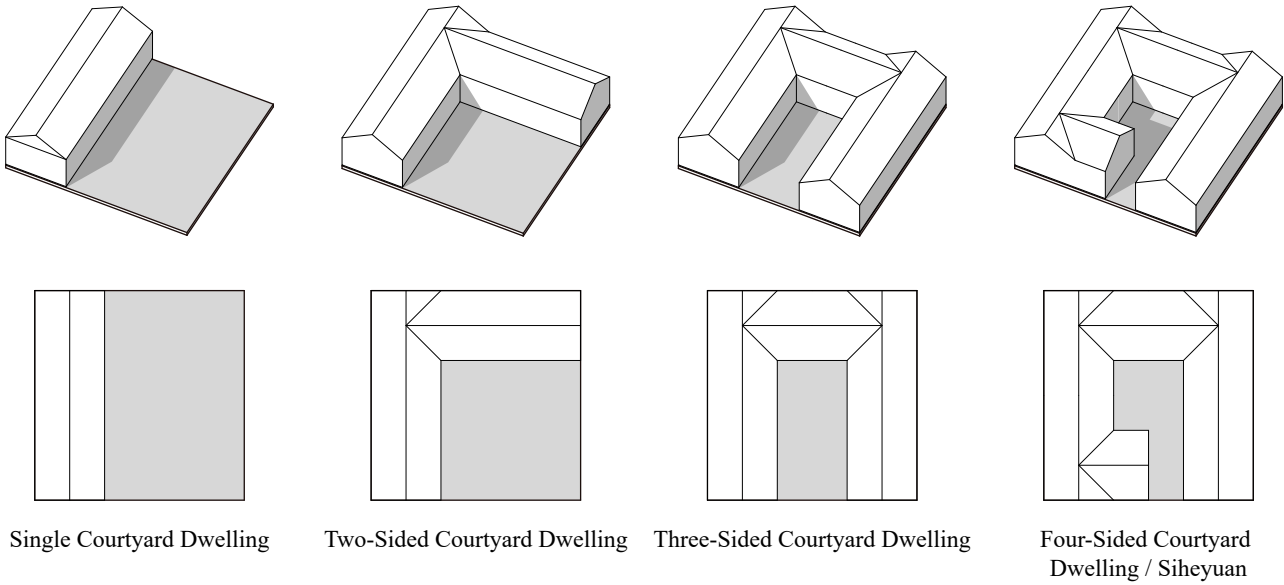


Image 65 Building Type
Draw by Author

4.3 Introduction to Selected Building

4.3.1 Building History

Late Ming to early Qing dynasty The house was built.	1962 The grandfather of the current owner bought the house.
During land reform, it was divided and used by three farming families. After 1911	Only the family of six members lives here long-term: the elderly couple, their eldest son and his wife, and their two grandchildren. The eldest son's son and daughter-in-law, the second son's family of three, and the third son's family of four work outside all year and return only during festivals and holidays.
	Now

Image 66 Building History
Draw by Author
Source: Homeowner's oral history

4.3.2 Building Form and Function Analysis

This courtyard is an rare example of irregular courtyard dwelling within the Sanheyuan typology (*residence consisting of structures surrounding a courtyard on three sides*), almost the only one in the context of Sichuan traditional residential architecture. Unlike typical symmetrical designs, its east and west wings differ in form: the west wing has three conventional rooms, while the eastern wing adaptively adopts a stilt-legged structure (*diaojiaolou*) in response to topographic constraints. The upper space is used for daily living activities, while the lower space is used for raising livestock such as pigs, chickens, and rabbits to support the family's production and everyday needs.

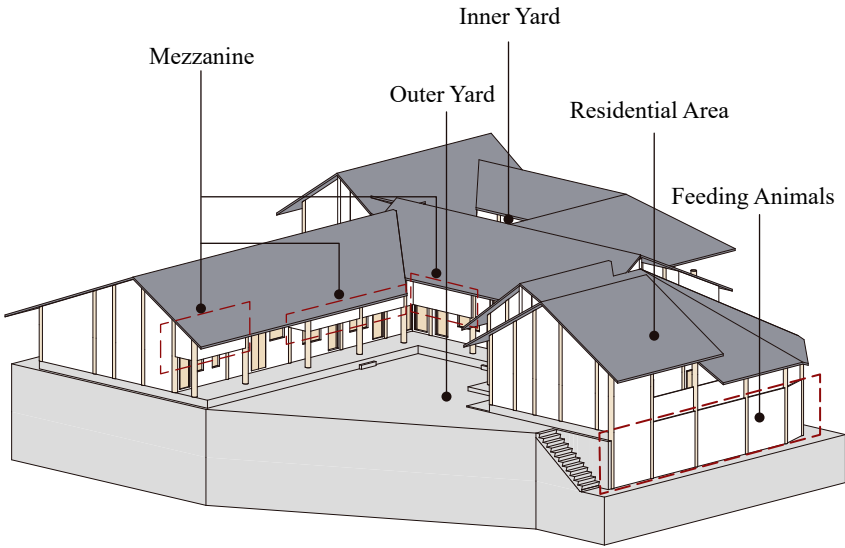
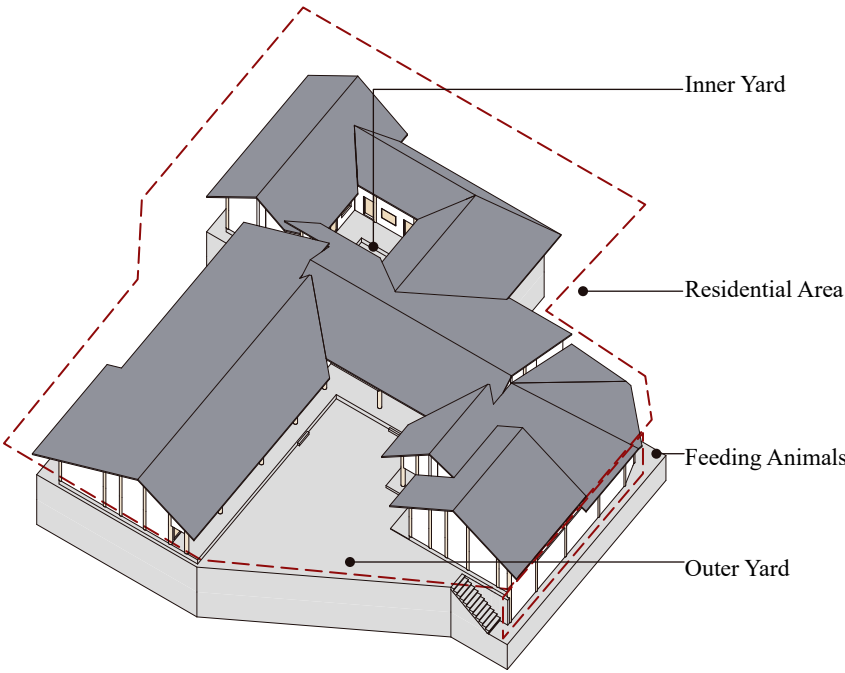


Image 67 Axonometric drawing
Draw by Author

Due to limits in survey conditions and technical tools, the mezzanine areas and the underground animal-feeding spaces could not be fully measured. It will be addressed as needed in later stages. However, these part do not affect the overall understanding of the building's spatial layout and functional features.

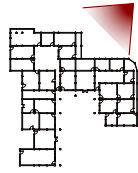


Image 68 Exterior Photos of the Building
Source: Photo by Author



Image 69 Outer Yard for Drying Grains

Source: Traditional Chinese Village Digital Museum <https://www.dmcvtv.cn/>

Outer Courtyard

This versatile and adaptable space serves multiple functions. Primarily, it acts as a social interaction zone for residents to gather after meals. Meanwhile, it functions as: a children's playground; an open-air dining area for large gatherings; a drying space for laundry and crops; a temporary theater where the steps double as seating, allowing people to observe children's activities or casual conversations within the courtyard.

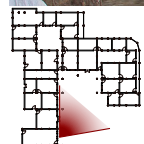


Image 70 Picture of Selected Building
Source: Photo by Author

Inner Courtyard

The central courtyard contains a special sunken square.

A sunken square pavement at the celestial well's (*tianjing*) center functions as a rainwater catchment system, a design called "*sishui guitang*". This feature reflects a belief linking rainwater collection to household wealth preservation in Chinese culture.

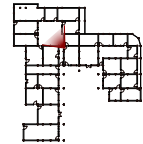


Image 71 Inner Yard
Source: Photo by the author



Image 72 Internal Wall
Source: Photo by the author



Image 73 Internal Bedroom
Source: Photo by the author

Current Use



Image 74 Current Use Analysis
Draw by Author

4.3.3 Interview with the Homeowner

Due to time limitation, this study was unable to finish a large-scale questionnaire survey and only communicated with the homeowner of this building. The homeowner's main needs are as follows:

Family and Living: The interior lighting needs improvement. The children work away from home for long periods, so the house is empty most of the time. The owner hopes that with some proper improvements, the children will be willing to return to the village to live and work, and spend more time with the elders.

House Maintenance: The homeowner finds the house generally comfortable, especially the courtyard. However, because they lack professional knowledge, they hope to receive regular guidance on repairs.

Public Space Needs: The village lacks spaces for leisure and social activities. The owner hopes that more public activity areas can be added in the future.

Overall, the owner hopes that improving the house and its surroundings will make family life more convenient.

4.4 Survey of Selected Building

4.4.1 Planimetry

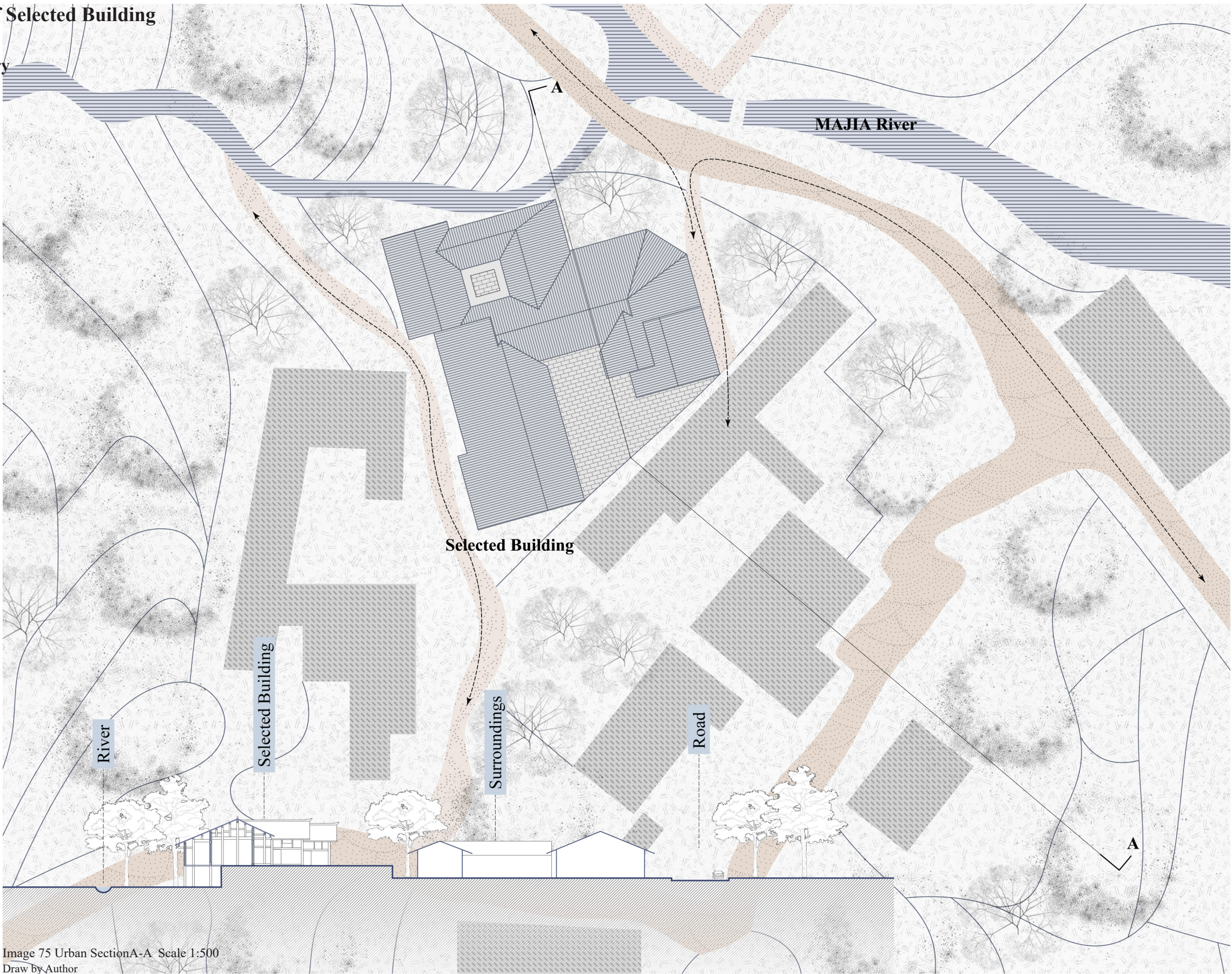
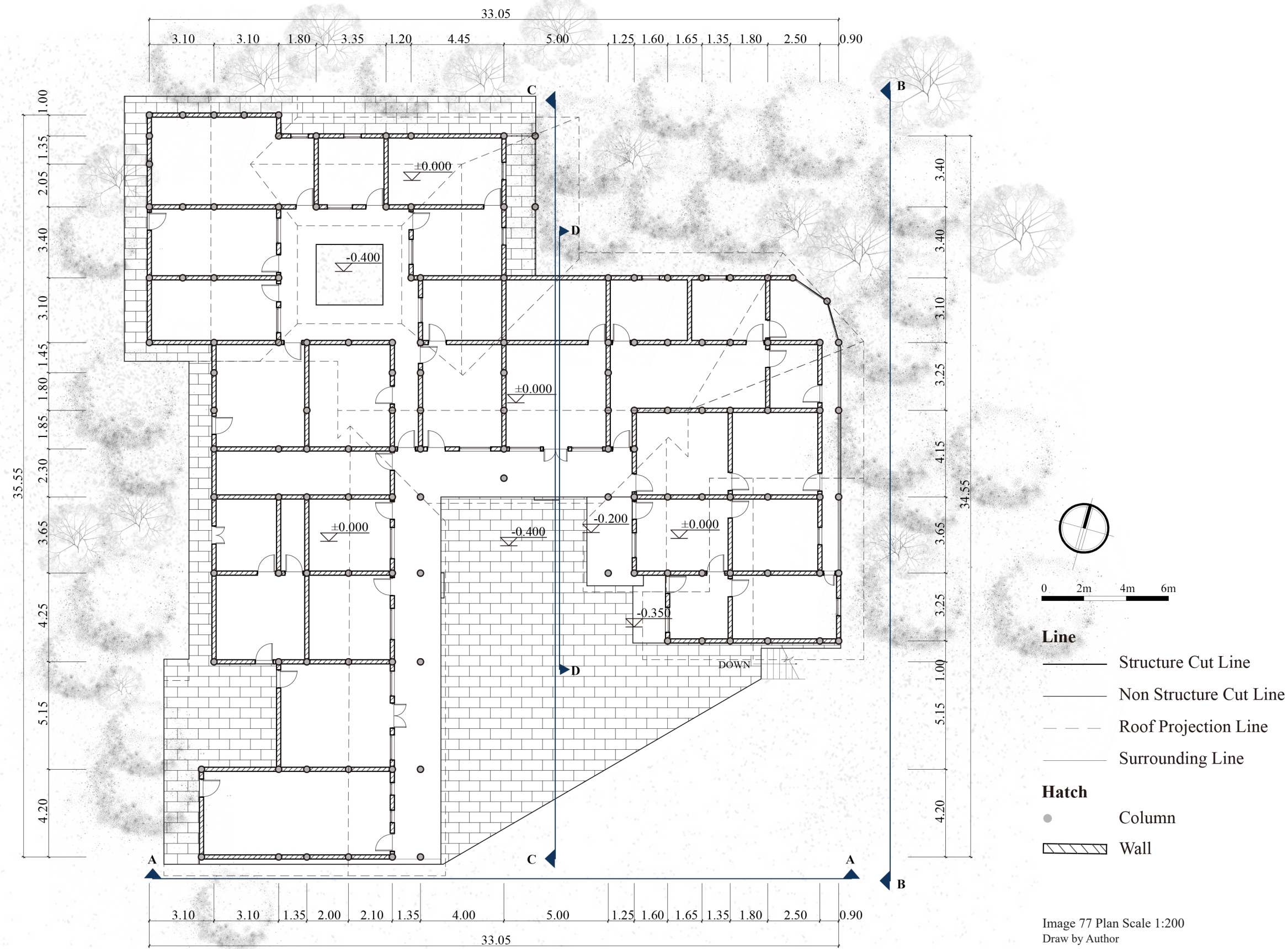


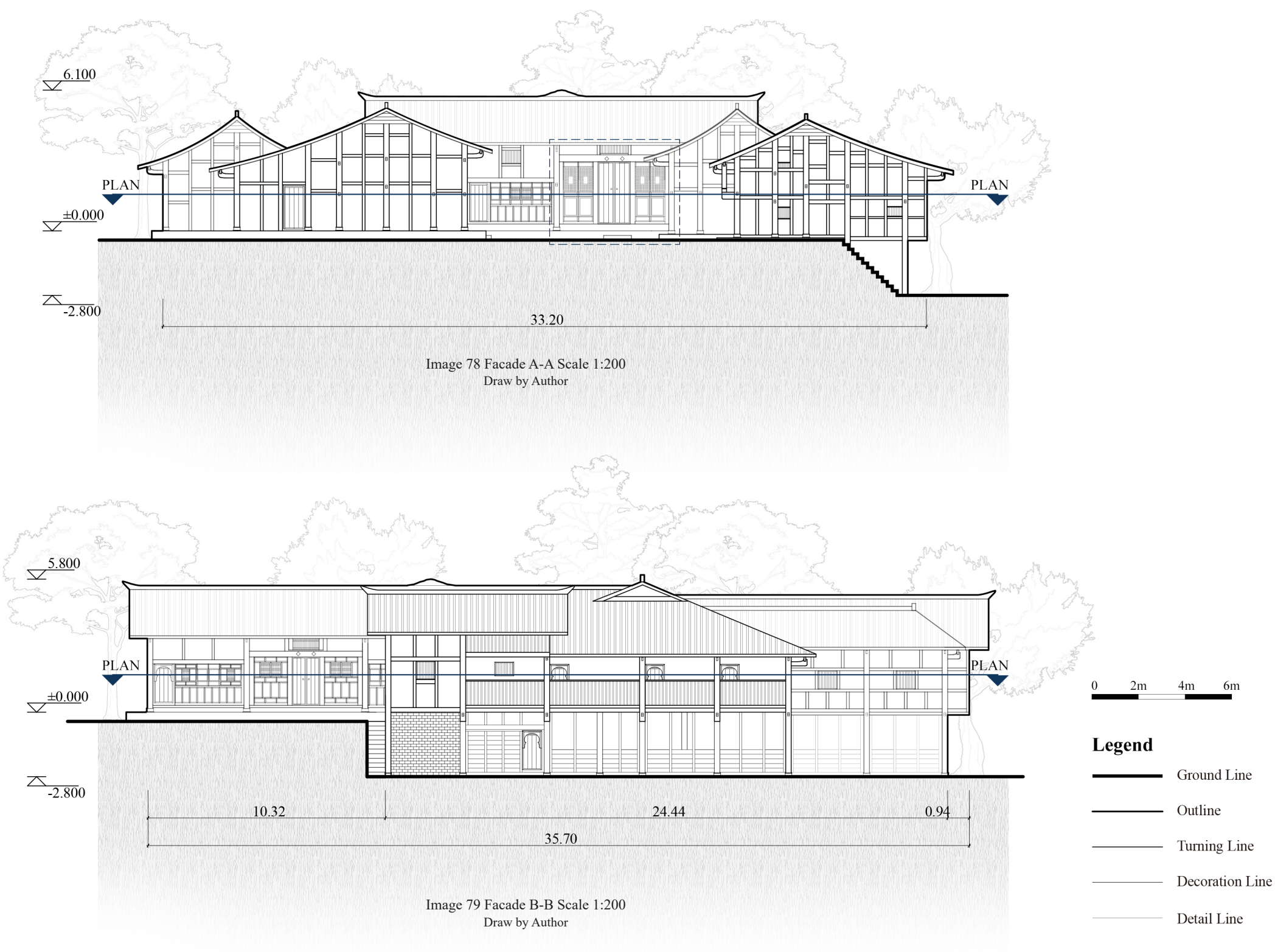
Image 75 Urban SectionA-A Scale 1:500
Draw by Author

Image 76 Planimetry Scale 1:500
Draw by Author

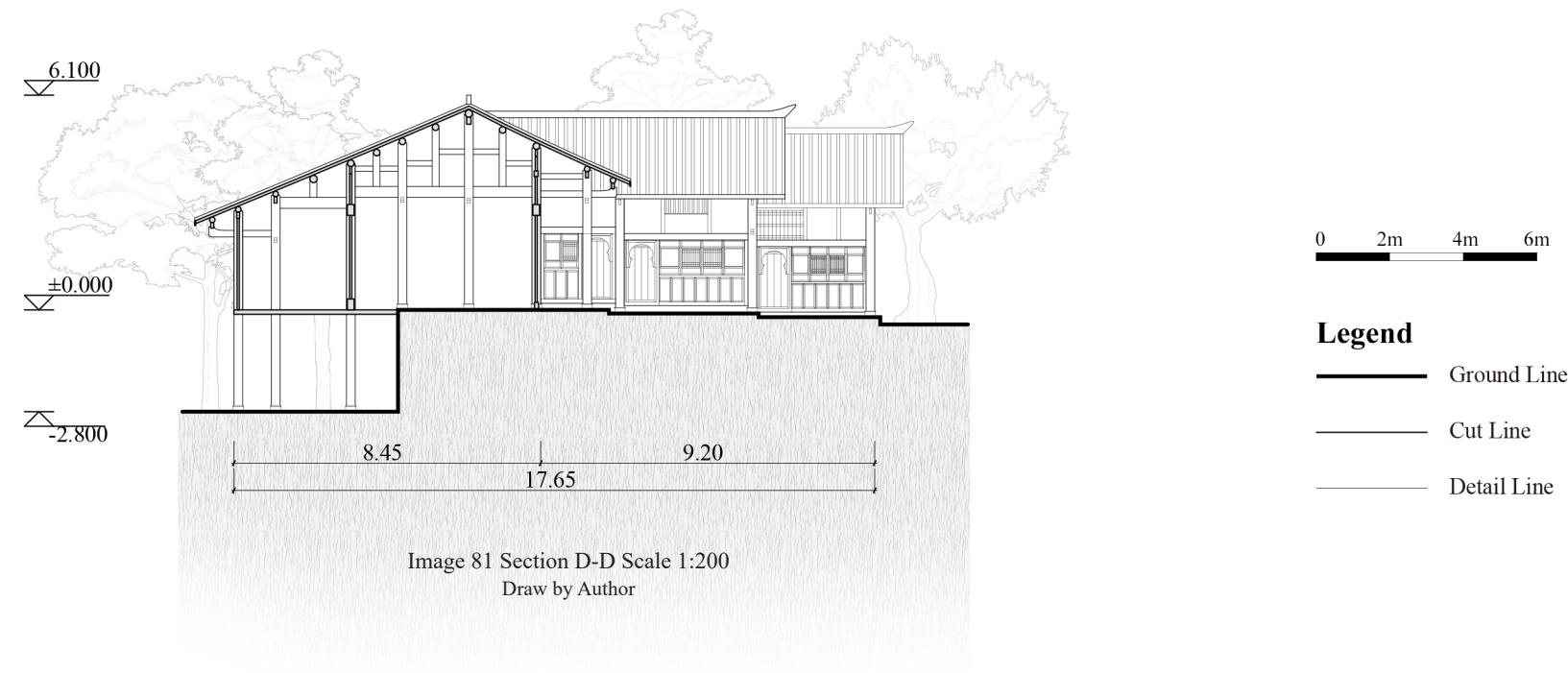
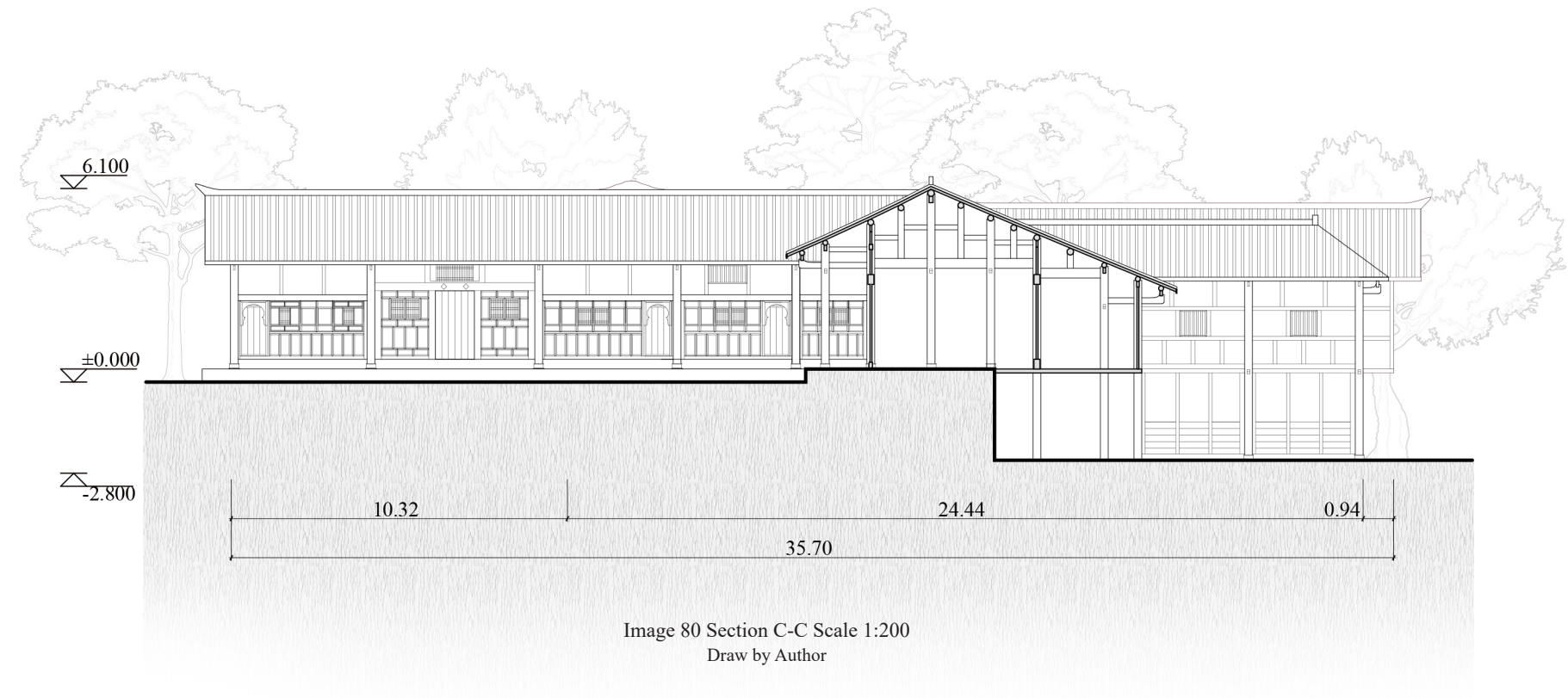
4.4.2 Plan



4.4.3 Facade



4.4.4 Section



4.5 Construction Element of Selected Facade



Image 82 Construction Element of Selected Facade Scale 1:50
Draw by Author

Roof System

Main Ridge Ornament:

At the center of the main ridge sits a *jisha* (ridge ornament), constructed by stacking small blue-grey tiles into distinctive patterns. Also known as the *zhongdui* (central pinnacle), is often shaped like a pagoda. Beyond its decorative role, it served practical purposes: it was believed to ward off evil spirits and also helped protect the building from lightning strikes.

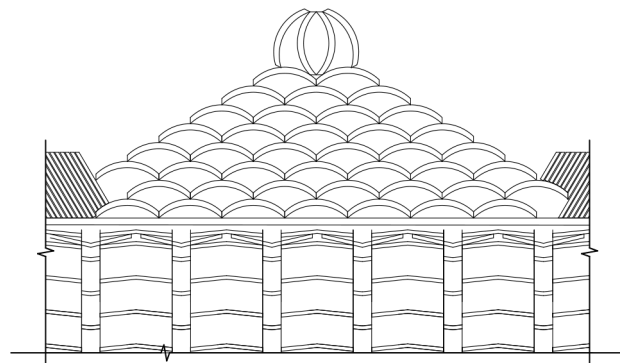


Image 83 Detail Drawing of the Center of Main Ridge Ornament Scale 1:20
Draw by Author

The conner

At the corners of the main roof ridge, small blue tiles are stacked to create an upward curve forming a simple scrolling grass pattern(*juancaowen*), symbolizes endless life.

The ridge body itself follows the traditional "stacked-tile ridge"(*wapianji*) technique common in southern China, where tiles are arranged vertically on their sides. This serves both practical and aesthetic purposes: it weatherproofs the roof, channels rainwater.

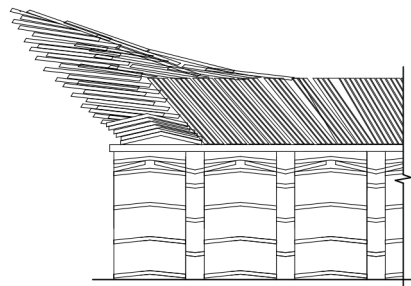


Image 84 Detail Drawing of the Conner of Main Ridge Ornament Scale 1:20
Draw by Author

Eaves

The eaves are composed of the roof layer, rafter system, eaves purlins, and overhanging components, forming a significant deep eaves space that facilitates rainwater drainage and sun protection.

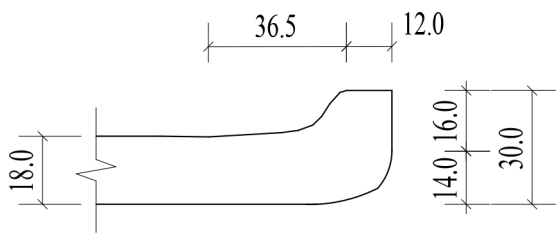
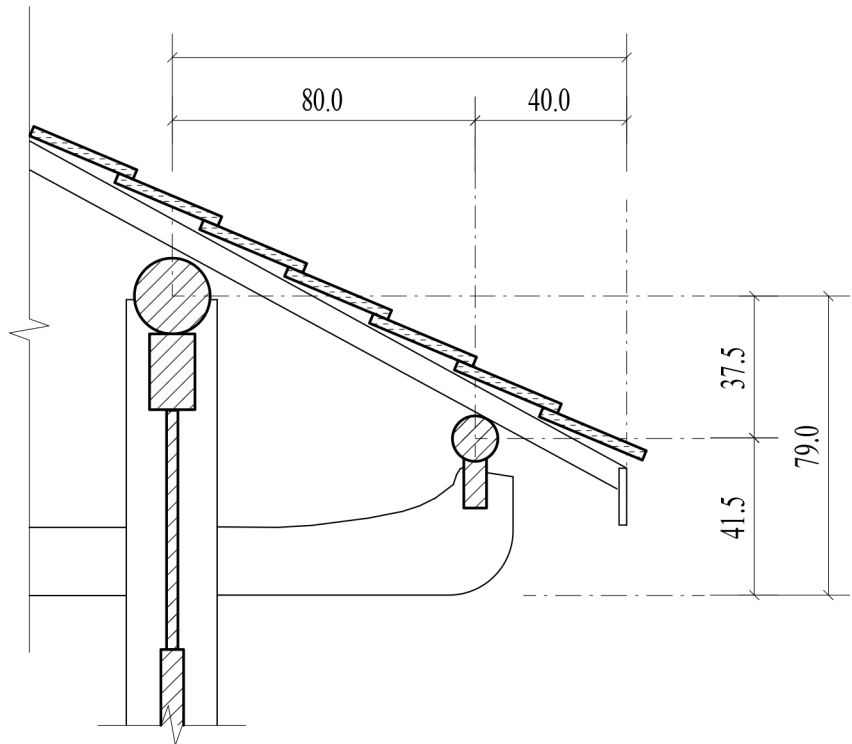
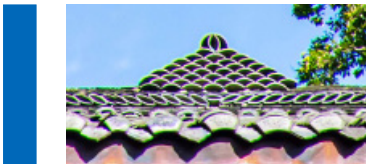


Image 85 Detail Drawing of the conner of Eaves Scale 1: 20 (cm)
Draw by Author

Roof

The roof is paved with small green tiles, which are easy to repair and replace.



Construction System

Column

Columns are core components of load-bearing and spatial organization, providing vertical load transfer and structural stability. Wooden columns are whole round timbers, with their bases tightly connected to the plinch through mortise and tenon joints, forming a flexible and stable support system. The column head is linked with beams and purlins through different structural systems such as the chuandou (through-beam) and tailiang (beam-lifted) frameworks.



Beams

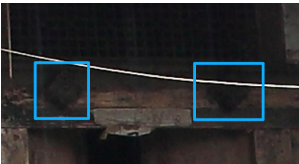
Beams are important horizontal components or load-bearing and structural organization. They mainly carry the load from the roof and transfer it to the columns. In the chuandou (through-beam) system, beams pass between columns and interlock with purlins and struts to form a continuous framework.



Image 86 Selected Facade
Photo by Author

Decoration

Beams are not only the main load-bearing units of the structure, but also important elements of space division and decoration. They are often decorated with paintings or carvings to reflect the architectural level and aesthetic characteristics.



Plinch

The plinch (*zhuchu*) is a component in traditional Chinese architecture. A stone block is added to the foot of the column to isolate the foot of the column from the ground, effectively preventing moisture-induced decay. Additionally, it enhances the load-bearing capacity of the column foundation.

The belly section often features decorative patterns. These patterns are diverse and rich in variation, covering subjects such as flowers, birds, animals, auspicious symbols, and scenes reflecting local customs. The carvings are ornate and finely executed.



Image 87 Column Plinch
Photo by Author

Wall

Wall Construction

The building primarily adopts timber as its structural material, utilizing a traditional post-and-beam wooden framework to support the entire house. The walls are commonly constructed using a bamboo and clay system. This method involves weaving bamboo strips or slats between the horizontal beams and vertical columns to form a lattice framework. Straw fibers are then added to improve cohesion, followed by the application of ramed earth. After the earth dries, the surface is finished with a layer of white limewash.

This wall construction is not only lightweight and breathable, but also resistant to cracking. It effectively prevents condensation during humid seasons. Additionally, the hard bamboo strips tend to make noise when disturbed, which not only protects against moisture but also acts as a theft deterrent.

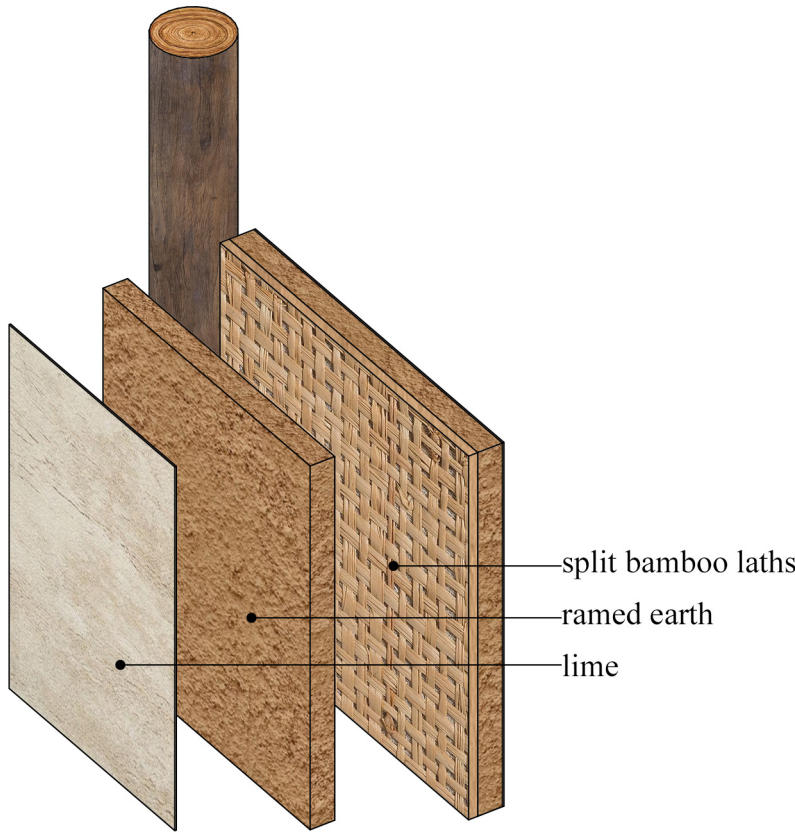


Image 88 Wall Construction
Draw by Author
Source: Chinese Traditional Village Digital Museum

Door

Double-leaf Door

A double-leaf door is constructed from several wide wooden planks joined together and secured to the vertical frame with mortise and tenon joints or iron fittings. It serves as the main entrance to a residence and features a large structure, creating a wide passageway when opened.



Image 89 Double-leaf Door
Photo by Author

Single-leaf Door

A single-leaf door is typically used for secondary entrances or separate rooms. The door leaves are constructed from wide wooden planks and are relatively simple to construct. These doors are smaller in size and are often used with wooden latches or iron locks.



Image 90 Single-leaf Roof
Photo by Author

Windows

Vertical-lattice Window (*zhiling chuang*)

It has a simple structure, consisting of a series of evenly spaced vertical wooden bars (*called ling*) embedded within the window frame. It lacks intricate carvings or lattice patterns. This window type can be traced back to the Han dynasty and was one of the most common forms in early timber architecture.

Its primary functions are ventilation and security. The sturdy vertical bars effectively resist external forces, acting like a wooden fence. However, its lighting performance is relatively limited, as the wooden bars block part of the daylight, and the window itself cannot be opened or adjusted.

Due to its strength, and low cost, the vertical-lattice window was typically used on secondary facades, high-level openings (for light and ventilation), kitchens or storage rooms, and lower-class buildings. It emphasizes practicality rather than decoration.



Image 91 Vertical-lattice Window
Photo by Author

Latticed Window (*gexin chuang*)

The latticed window is typically divided into two parts. The upper part, known as the gexin or "lattice core", is the main part of the window. It consists of a grid of wooden bars arranged in square patterns, ensuring security while allowing light and ventilation. The center of the lattice often features a decorative motif with lucky symbolic meanings. The lower part, called the skirt panel (*qunban*), is made of solid wood, ensuring structural stability and visual privacy.

When the door is closed, the upper lattice part still allows light and air to enter the interior while preventing effective defence. It also enables interior occupants to observe the outside through the patterned grid.



Image 92 Latticed Window
Photo by Author

The threshold window (*kanchuang*)

It is installed above the lower "threshold wall" (*kanqiang*) of a brick or timber structure, hence its name. It is one of the most common and refined window types in traditional architecture.

The core of this window is also the "lattice core," but the craftsmanship is more complex. It consists of a central

decorative pattern and a surrounding grid. This type of window often forms an integrated facade module together with the lower wall panel and the window frame below. The complex latticework introduces a gentle, diffused sunlight, creating a calm and elegant atmosphere indoors. It allows sufficient light and ventilation while effectively blocks external views.

The level of craftsmanship and the complexity of the lattice design directly reflected the owner's social status and wealth. This exquisite sill window is often used in main living spaces such as halls.



Image 93 Threshold Window
Photo by Author



Windows Lattice Pattern

It is located in the center of a lattice, are composed of carved wooden elements forming decorative patterns. They serve both structural and decorative functions. When sunlight filters through them into the room, they create a dappled pattern of light and shadow, creating a soft and rhythmic spatial atmosphere.

At a social level, the complexity of window lattice reflects the hierarchy of a building and the status of its inhabitants. Ordinary dwellings often use simple geometric patterns, while high-class buildings or halls often use carvings and rich symbolic designs, reflecting the owner's cultural refinement and aesthetic tastes.



Image 94 Windows Latticed Pattern
Photo by Author

Ground System

Wooden Sill

The timber sill is usually placed on the stone sill to support the wooden columns and prevent ground moisture from rising. Due to the humid climate of southern China, wooden structures are easily affected by dampness and decay. The use of a wooden sill helps to avoid direct contact between the column base and the ground, slowing down the process of wood decay. When the wooden sill becomes decayed, it can be replaced for quick repair, maintaining the stability of the structure and extending the overall lifespan of the building.

Stone Sill

The stone sill is a rectangular stone element, often with a circular groove or hole on its top for the timber sill or directly support the column base. It serves as an important transition layer between the foundation and the upper wooden structure. The use of stone sills effectively protects wooden structures from ground moisture and rainwater infiltration, preserving the original form and outline of the building over time.



4.6 Decay Analysis of Selected Facade

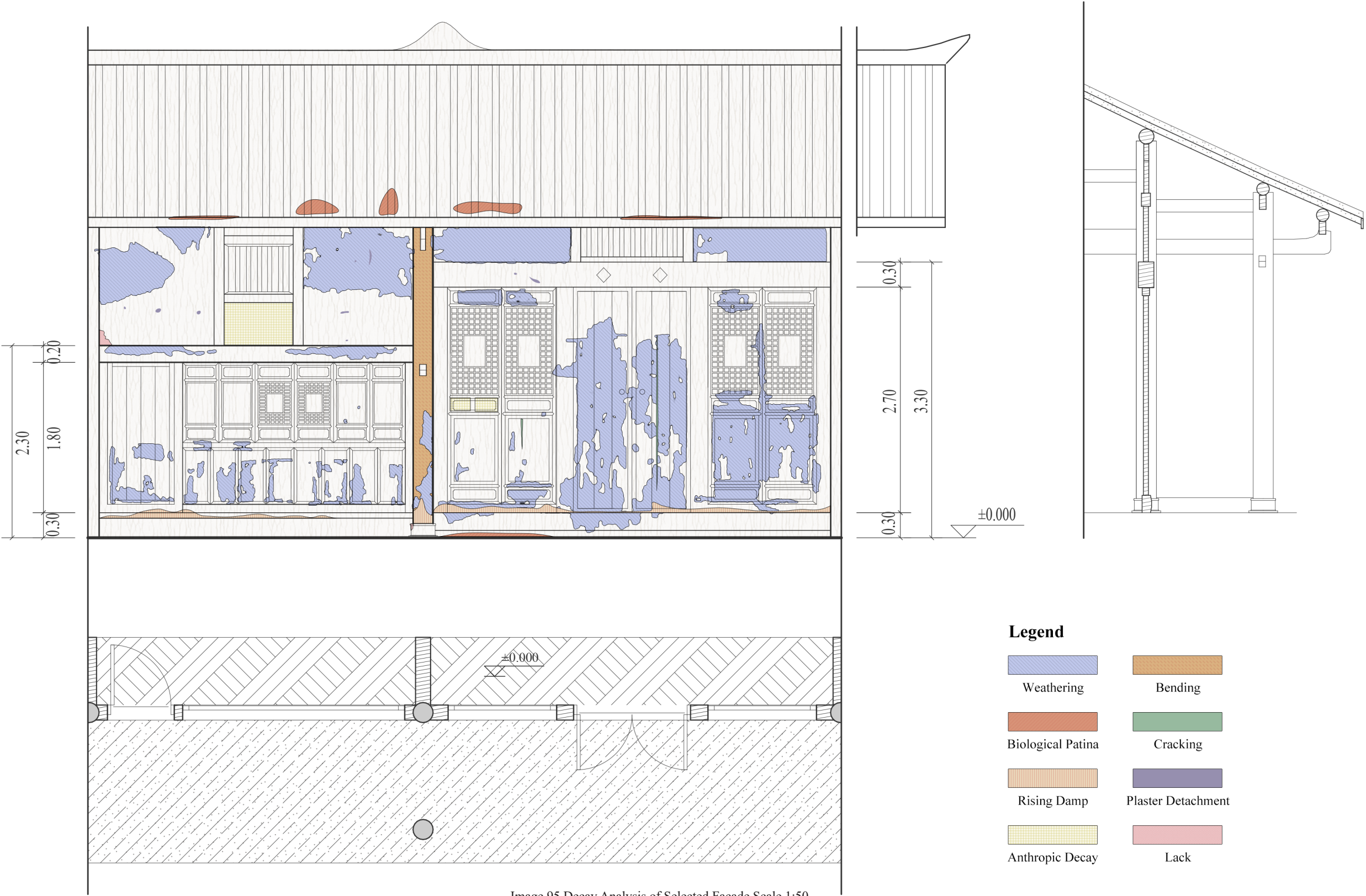


Image 95 Decay Analysis of Selected Facade Scale 1:50
Draw by Author

Cause of Decay



Surface Weathering

Due to aged finish layer or exposure on the windward side, the facade exposed to sunlight, wind and rain for a long time. This caused the surface of exposed columns, doors, windows to become gray, lose their gloss. And the paint or beeswax coating become white.



Bending

During use, wooden components are subject to long-term stress, changes in moisture content, or instability in structural joints. These factors can lead to bending of columns, beams and other structural members.



Biological Patina

There are some areas of the building with long-term dampness, water accumulation under the eaves, or poor ventilation. Algae, moss, or microorganisms tend to colonize these areas, forming green patches or fuzzy layers. The surface of wood or plaster becomes dark, moist, and slippery, which accelerates material weathering.



Cracking

Wood expands and contracts with temperature changes, causing cracks to form along the grain of wooden components.



Rising Damp

This is caused by porous building materials, poor ventilation, and improper maintenance, allowing ground moisture to flow upward through the materials.



Plaster Detachment

Poor surface preparation, moisture penetration, or poor material quality can cause localized peeling of the wall surface, exposing rammed earth or bricks.



Anthropic Decay

Anthropic decay is caused by human activities such as pollution, deforestation, urbanization, industrial improper processes, and waste disposal.



Lack

Long-term weathering, peeling or accidental damage may result in the complete loss of components or surfaces, exposing the structure or leaving voids. For example, a part of a column base is missing.



4.7 Conclusion of Problems

1. Population outflow

As many young and middle-aged residents work outside for long periods, the population has decreased sharply. Daily public activities have weakened, and many traditional courtyard houses have become abandoned.

2. Aging of traditional buildings

Many houses in the village are timber structures. After long-term moisture exposure and a lack of maintenance, problems such as decayed column bases, and peeling walls are very common. Because of the construction way, many houses lack windows. The internal light atmosphere is terrible.

3. Poor infrastructure and public services

Transportation, drainage, electricity, and public service facilities are clearly insufficient. It is difficult to attract young people to return and cannot support new industries or community activities.



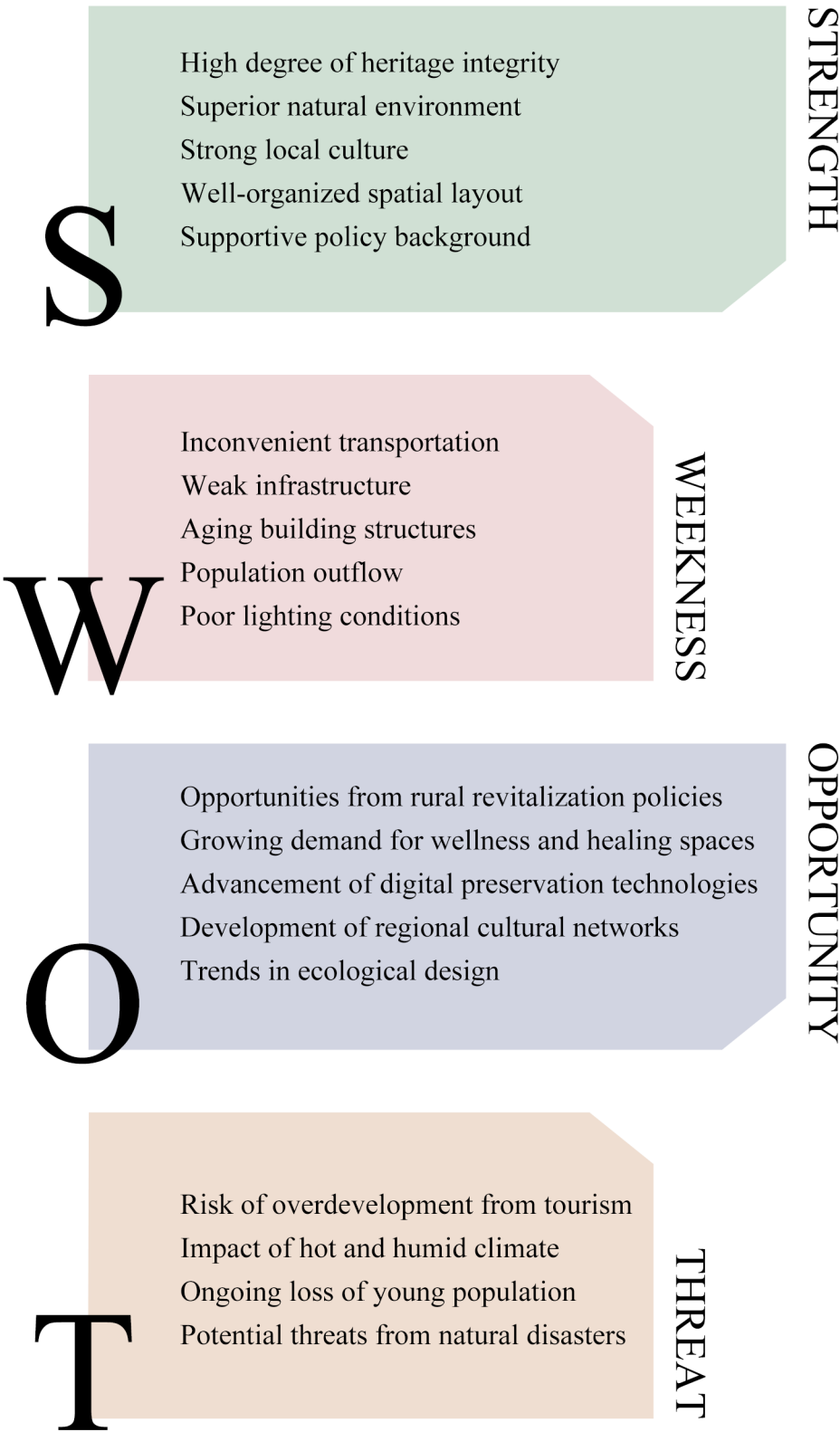
5. Restoration and Design Proposal

5.1 Restoration of Selected Facade

5.2 Restoration of Everyday Heritage

5.3 Design Concept

5.1 SWOT Analysis



Strength

Liyuanba Village has clear advantages for site renewal due to its well-preserved settlement pattern and rich local culture. The village remains in good condition, with more than fifty traditional wooden houses still standing, twenty-eight of which date back to the Ming and Qing dynasties. The components and spatial forms are highly representative, showing strong continuity and historical authenticity. The architecture follows the mountain terrain, forming a terraced layout. With streams, river networks, and woodlands, the village is highly integrated with the natural environment, offering both scenic and health-oriented potential.

In addition, the village preserves a complete system of living culture, like folk songs, woodcarving, and bamboo weaving are still used in daily life. Liyuanba has also been listed in the third batch of China’s Traditional Villages, receiving policy-level protection and institutional support for future restoration and reuse. Together, these elements form the key strengths of Liyuanba Village in rural revitalization and spatial regeneration.

Weakness

The village also faces a series of internal weaknesses in its development process. Located deep in the Daba Mountains, inconvenient transportation limits the possibility of external population and industrial inflow. Infrastructure is underdeveloped, with insufficient drainage, electricity, internet, and public space services, making it difficult to introduce new functions and promote tourism. Most traditional wooden buildings show different kind of dampness, decay, and structural aging, leading to high costs for repair and maintenance. At the same time, a large number of young and middle-aged residents have left the village, leaving mainly elderly inhabitants, which weakens both community vitality and self-governance capacity. In addition, property ownership in some traditional courtyards is complex, increasing the difficulty of implementing renewal projects.

Opportunity

At the national level, rural revitalization strategies and cultural heritage protection policies continue to promote the "traditional villages and cultural tourism integration" model, providing both institutional and financial support for Liyuanba. Meanwhile, with the rise of new lifestyles such as health tourism, cultural residencies, and rural healing, the village's ecological environment and slow pace of life have become uniquely attractive. The development of digital technologies also offers new ways to present and communicate Liyuanba's heritage, for example, digital archives and virtual tours can help increase its visibility and participation. More importantly, the village can form a regional network with nearby traditional settlements of red culture in northeastern Sichuan, creating more narrative-based cultural routes and supporting the systematic revival of local culture. In addition, traditional materials can be combined with modern eco-friendly techniques to establish a low-energy model for restoration and adaptive reuse.

Threat

The revitalization of Liyuanba Village also faces potential threats. Overdevelopment could damage the existing ecological balance and daily life patterns, weakening the authenticity of its "everyday heritage". The hot and humid climate accelerates the aging of wooden structures, increasing both technical and financial challenges for maintenance. If external capital enters without proper community consultation, it may cause conflicts in the distribution of economic benefits and the expression of local culture, damaging the original social structure. In addition, the continued outflow of population and the loss of traditional craftsmanship further threaten the village's vitality. Combined with natural risks such as landslides and floods caused by the complex terrain, these factors introduce uncertainty to the long-term sustainability of the village.

5.2 Restoration of Everyday Heritage

1. Community Co-management Mechanism

Restored building is managed by a co-management committee primarily composed of residents and the village committee, supplemented by local universities such as Sichuan University. This ensures that residents' opinions are heard.

The committee discusses issues such as space reuse and event organization together. At the village entrance, a signboard with a QR code provides information about committee members and maintenance schedules, making community governance visible and transparent.

2. Educational and Experiential Programs

In collaboration with primary and secondary schools and universities in Sichuan Province (especially those with architecture, art, or history programs) field-based learning projects can be established.

Students can participate in survey, restoration, material research, story documentation, or digital archiving. Summer workshops can also be organized to enhance hands-on learning.



Image 96 Architecture Students
Surveyed the Building
Source: Photo by Author

3. Creat a Craft Experience Workshop

Some existing spaces can be partially adapted while preserving their original spatial character. The workshop's content should relate to the everyday practices of the building and its residents.

Since the owner and his family are skilled in bamboo weaving, the workshop can focus on bamboo craft experiences. This not only preserves the craft but also gives the elderly a sense of value. Additional activities such as cooking classes and fabric dyeing workshops can also be included.



Image 97 Traditional Clothes of Villages
Source: <https://main.dmctv.com.cn/villages/>

4. Use of Courtyard Spaces

Semi-public and courtyard spaces are key areas for social activities. On the basis of preserving or adding traditional furniture such as wooden and stone benches, the design should center on the actions of "sitting" and "viewing", encouraging residents and visitors to use the space spontaneously.

In addition, part of the courtyard space can be jointly planned with residents to serve as a space for periodic exhibitions and community events, traditional crafts, or outcomes of school collaboration projects.

Exhibitions should use lightweight and movable structures, such as wooden display frames, fabric panels, or hanging photo arrays. This allows the space to flexibly shift between daily leisure and temporary events.

5.3 Design Concept

5.3.1 Target Users

Local Residents

The design retains living functions and habits for the original household. Their daily routines, such as cooking, planting, or chatting, become part of the healing process.

Travellers and Short-term Residents

Artists, researchers, or travelers seeking emotional balance and rural experience can stay temporarily. They participate in craft workshops and meditation, experiencing the slow rhythm of the countryside.

Community Participants and Returnees

Local young people returning from cities may engage in cultural or ecological programs. The project offers shared working and exhibition spaces.

5.3.2 Design proposal

This design aims to transform a traditional dwelling in Liyuanba Village into an eco-healing courtyard. It explores a contemporary expression of traditional space through local living patterns ways. The project redefines the traditional courtyard as a system of living, healing and learning, making daily life a continuous healing process.

The whole courtyard is designed around the idea of a "breathing architecture".

Considering that the original owner still lives in the house, the mezzanine space and the animal-feeding area are kept to meet their daily living and production needs.

From outside to inside, the spaces form a gradual transition from public to semi-public to private areas. Each room has a different healing function:

The main hall serves as a center for quiet healing and social activities.

The inner courtyard becomes a healing garden.

The east wing is used for handicraft workshops.

The west wing keeps the original owner's living space, allowing shared living.

The outer courtyard acts as an open interface for the community, providing space for communication and events.

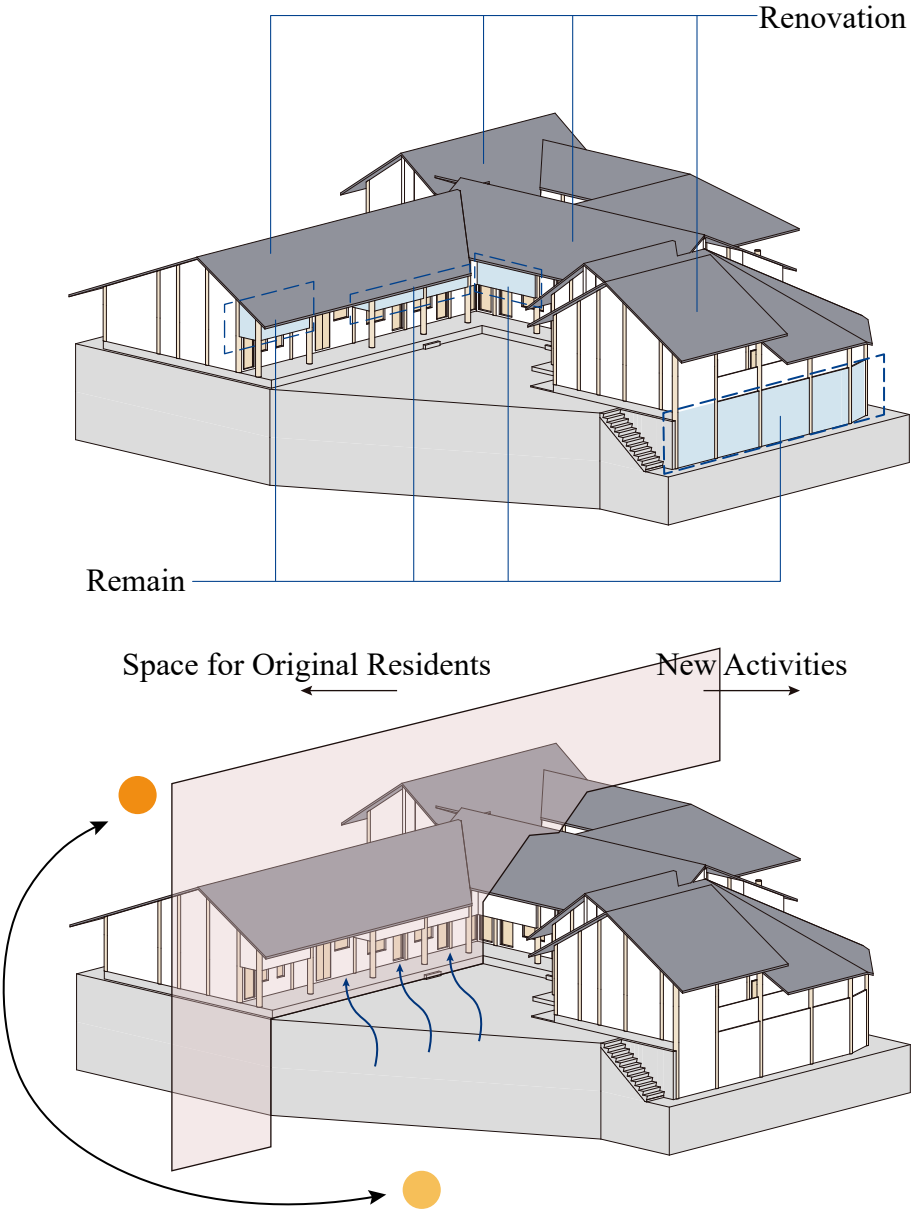


Image 98 Regeneration Area
Diagram
Draw by Author

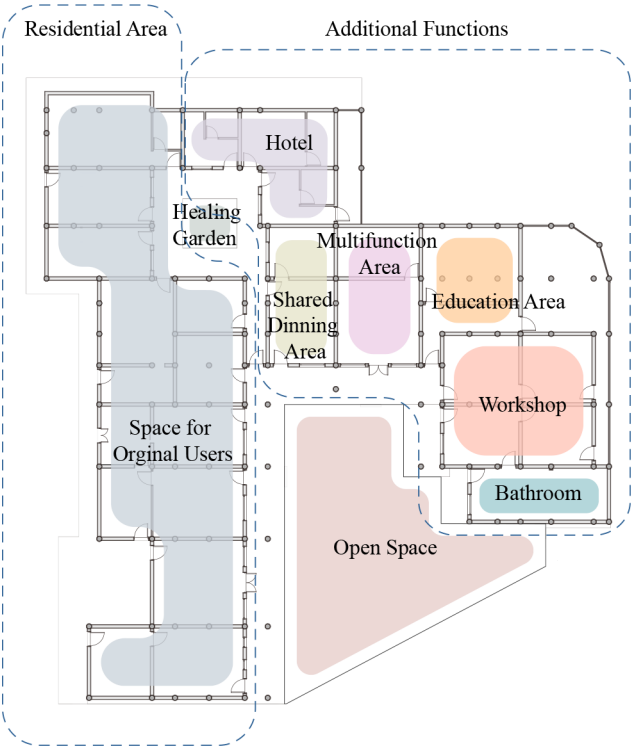


Image 99 Function Analysis
Draw by Author

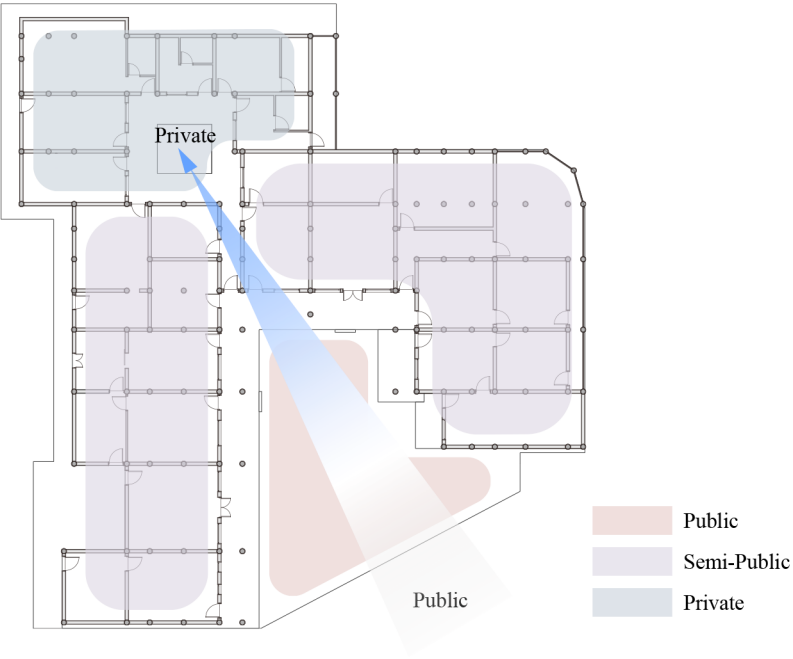
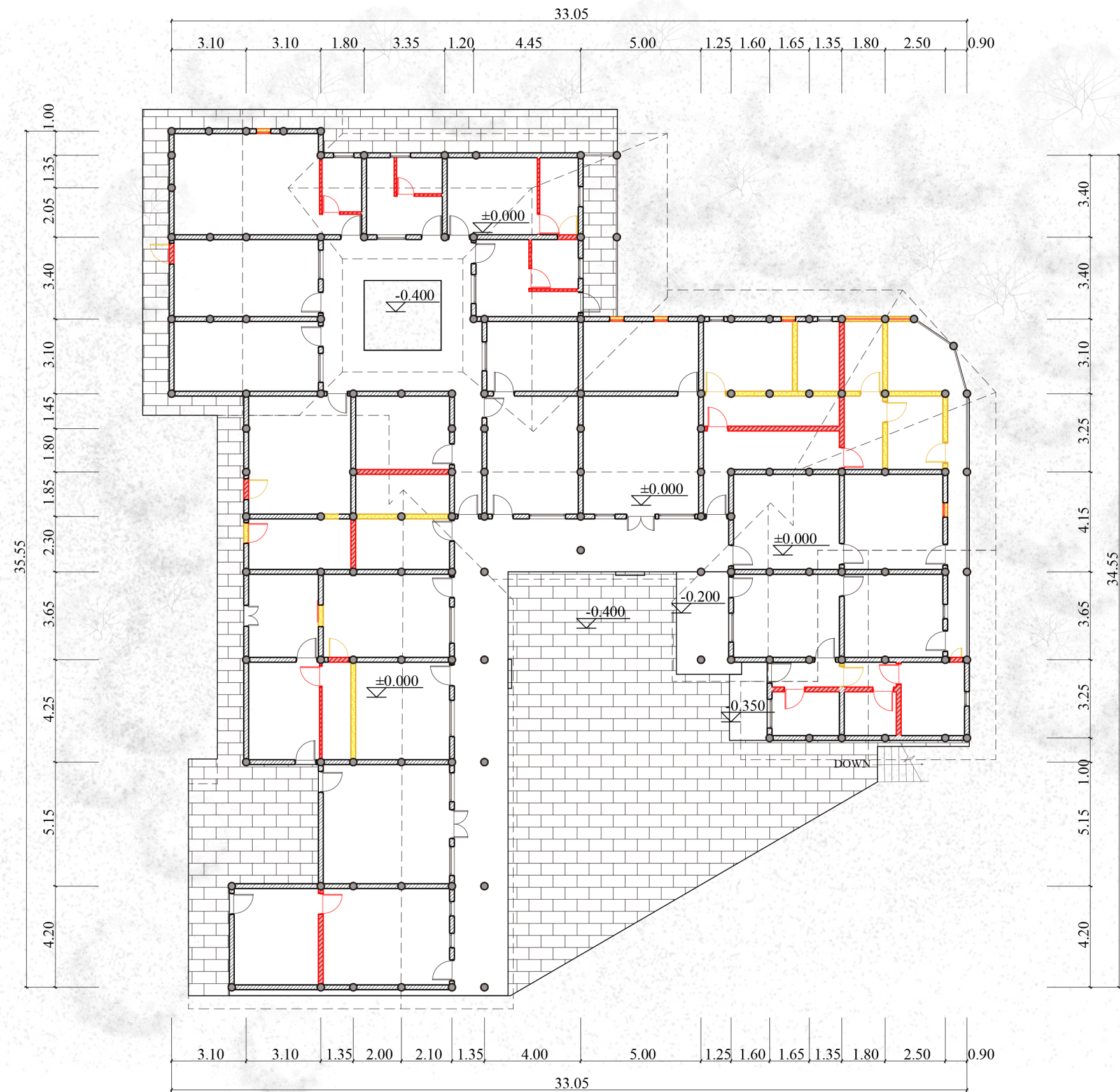


Image 100 Spatial Analysis
Draw by Author





Legend

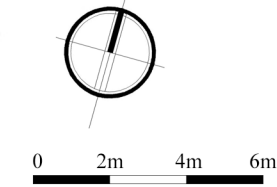
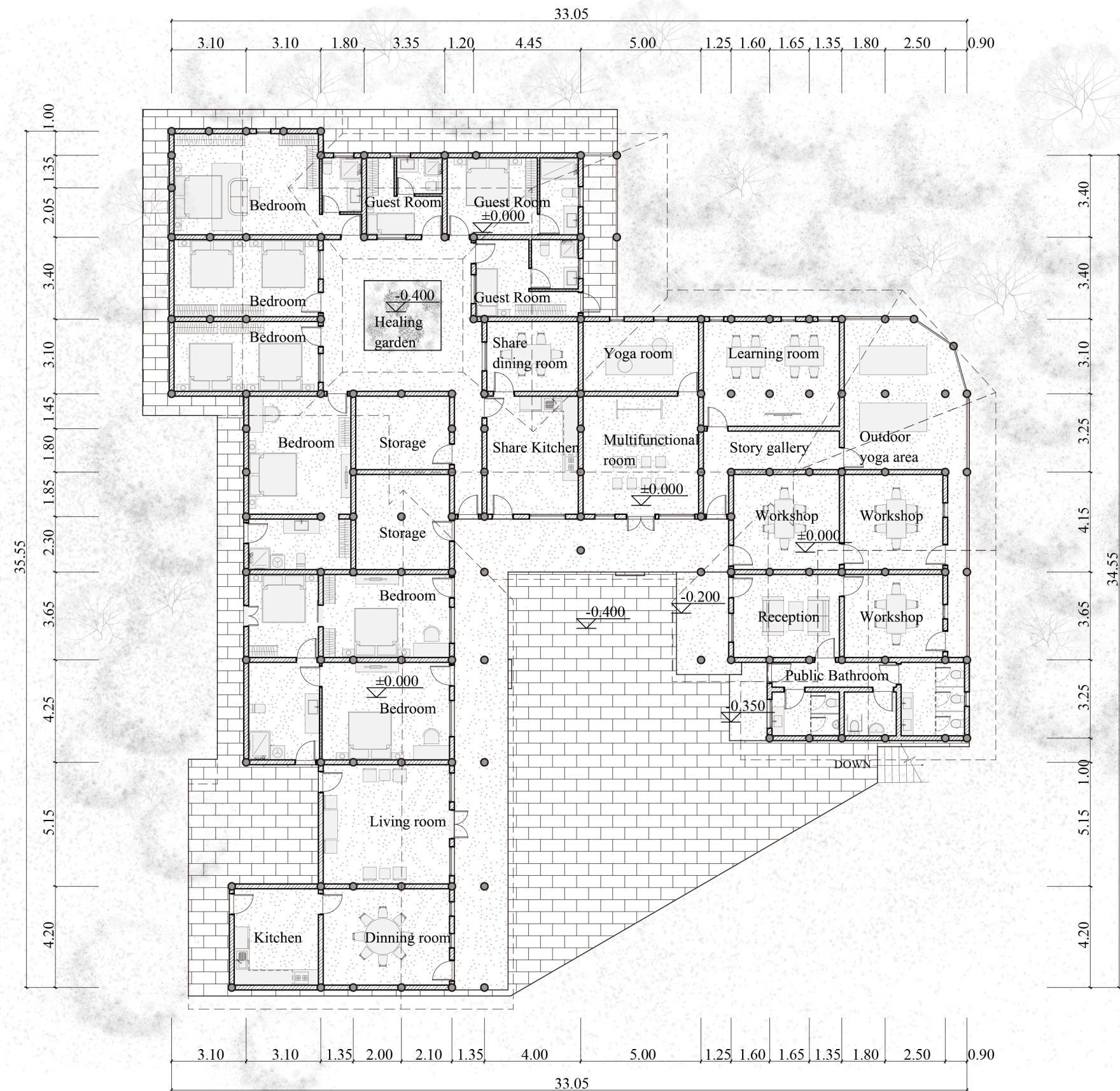
Line

- Existing Structure Cut Line
- New Additional Structure Cut Line
- Demolished Structure Cut Line
- Existing Non Structure Cut Line
- New Additional Non Structure Cut Line
- Demolished Non Structure Cut Line
- - - Roof Projection Line
- Surrounding Line

Hatch

- Column
- Existing Wall
- New Addition Wall
- Demolished Wall

Image 102 New Addition and Demolition Plan Scale 1:200
Draw by Author



Legend

Line

- Existing Structure Cut Line
- Existing Non Structure Cut Line
- Detailed Line
- Roof Projection Line
- Surrounding Line

Hatch

- Column
- Wall
- Interior Pavement

Image 103 Furnished Plan Scale 1:200
Draw by Author

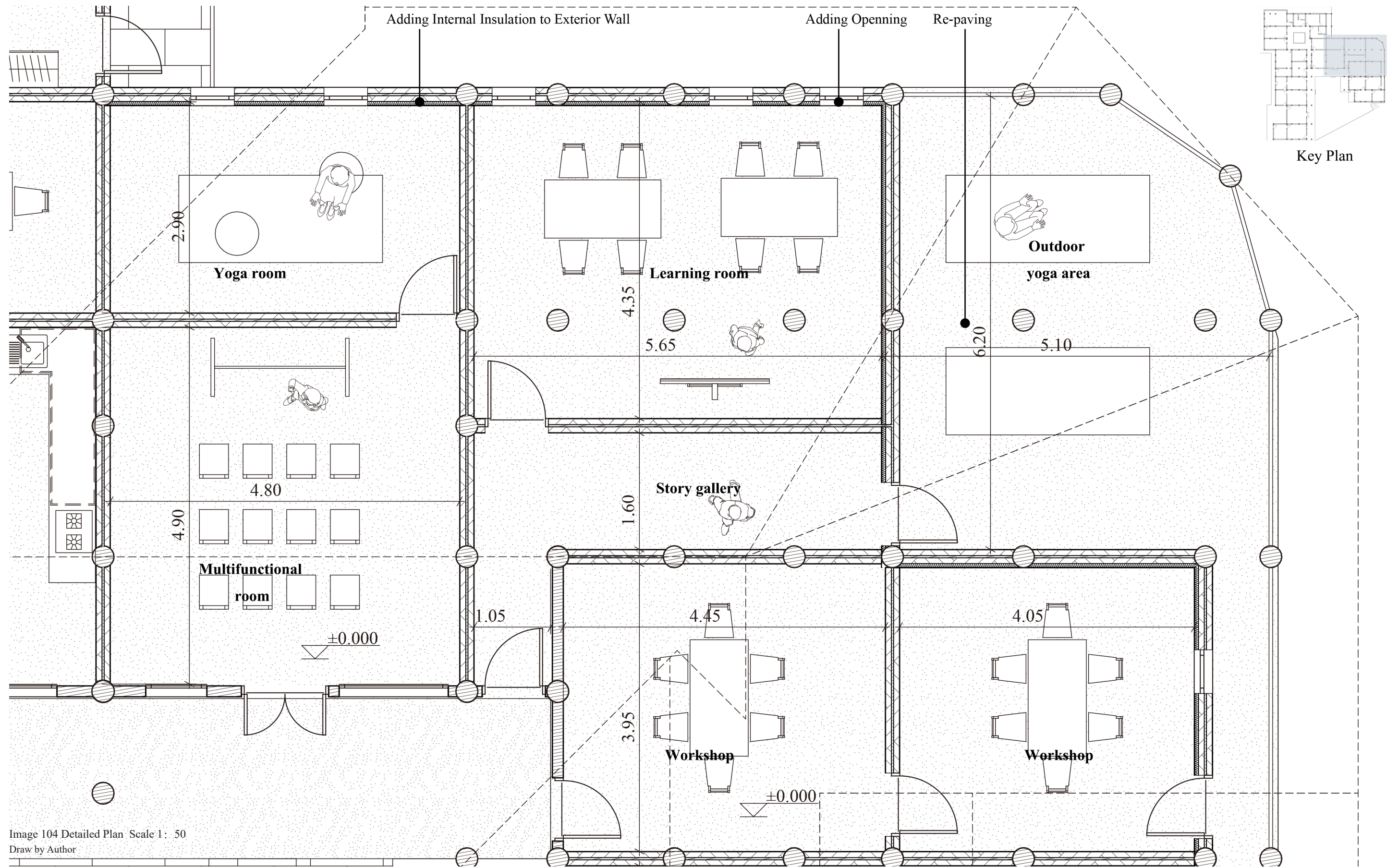


Image 104 Detailed Plan Scale 1 : 50
Draw by Author

Image 105 Wall Insulation Drawing
Scale 1:20
Draw by Author

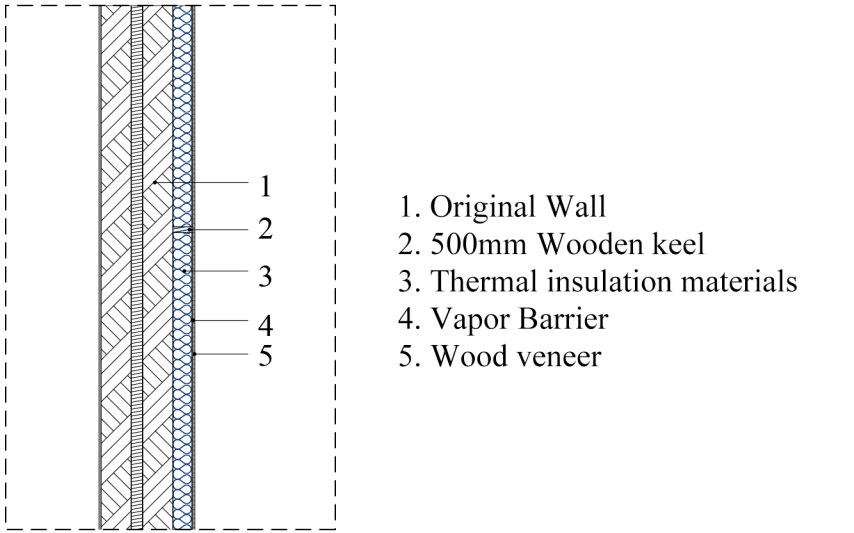


Image 106 Ground Pavement
Drawing Scale 1:20
Draw by Author

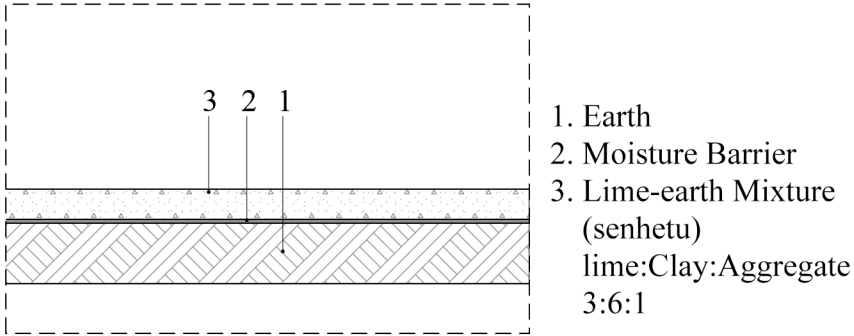
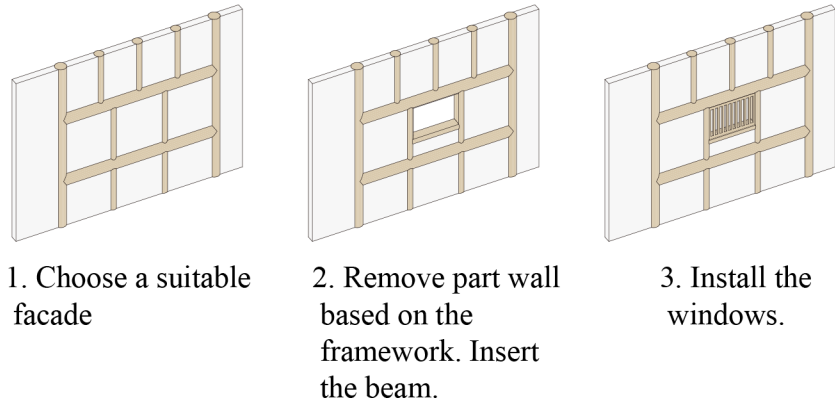


Image 107 Diagram of Additional
Windows
Draw by Author



5.4 Restoration of Selected Facade

From the perspective of official heritage, restoration takes an "archaeological" approach. This requires to remove later additions and returns the building to the most valuable period.

In contrast, everyday heritage uses a "biographical" perspective. The traces left by all the residents over the time collectively form the building's complete history.

The value of restoration is not only judged by historical or artistic value, but must also take into account emotional and social value.

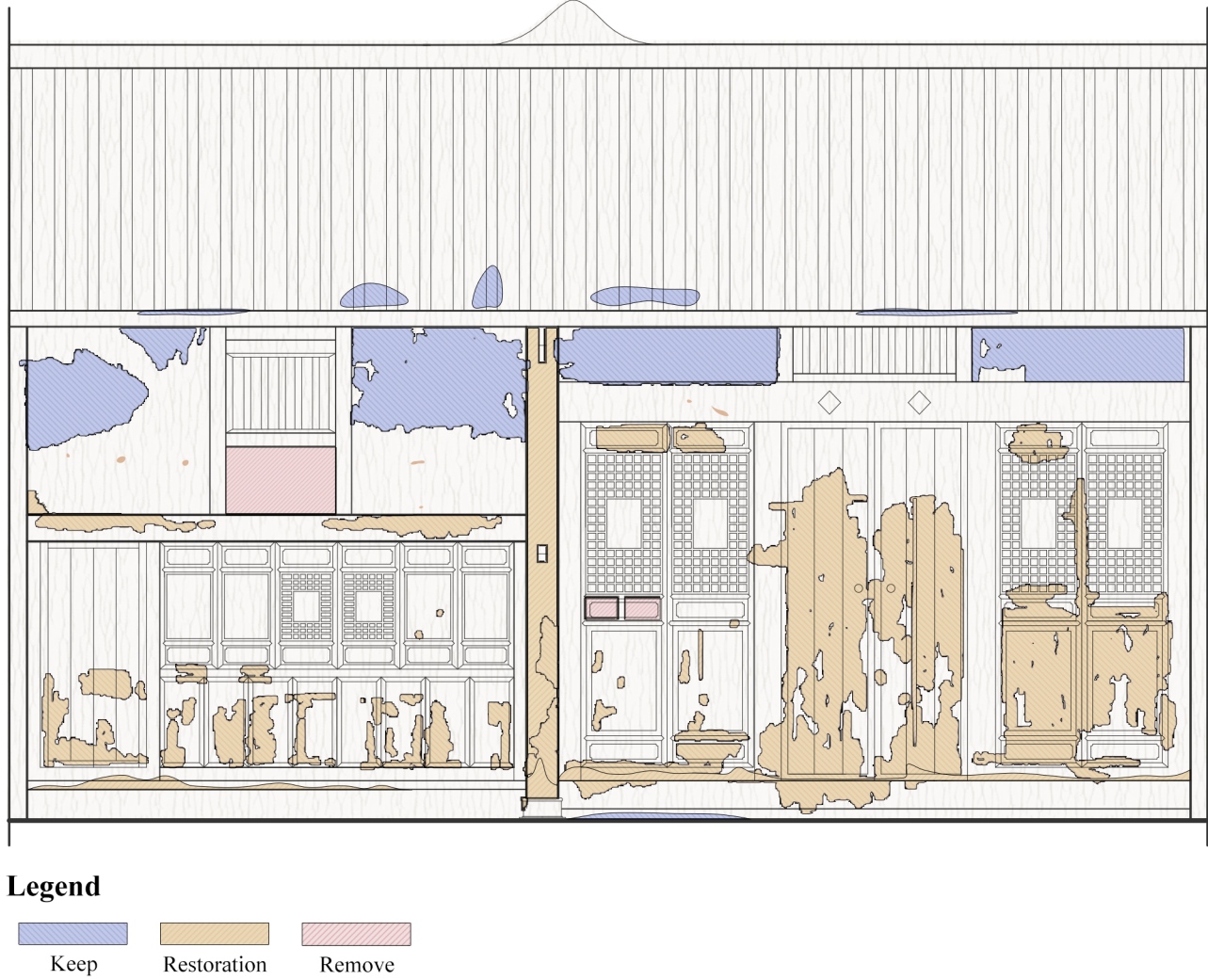


Image 108 Restoration Level of Selected Facade
Draw by Author

Restoration

These types of decay are usually highly threatening and progressive, affecting the structural safety of the entire building. Examples include bending, rising damp, plaster detachment, and cracking.

Bending and cracking: Structural safety issues that may lead to partial collapse.

Rising damp: It continuously damages wood, brick, and stone, causing biological patina and plaster detachment.

Surface weathering on the wood: Continuous weathering can cause wood panels to rot.

Plaster detachment: Improper cement plastering has allowed moisture to enter the interior structure.

Keep

These types of decay can be understood as part of everyday heritage. Preservation can be considered as long as they do not harm the building.

Surface weathering on the wall: Occurs on the finishing layer and does not affect the structural integrity of the building.

Biological patina: If it is a stable, harmless patina or some harmless moss, it is part of the building's life cycle and can be preserved.

Remove

Artificial additions that lack historical or emotional value can be removed after proper documentation.

For example, the informational board installed on this building. Its form and placement damage the visual integrity, therefore it can be removed.

Restoration Strategies

Bending

When a column bends, a temporary supporting structure can be used to hold the building in place. After releasing the load on the damaged column, it can be replaced with a new waterproof column.

A waterproof layer should also be added between the column and the base stone to prevent moisture from rising back into the wood.

Rising Damp

When decay occurs at the base of a column, a "pier joint" method can be used. The damaged part is removed and replaced with a new piece of wood, which is fixed to the original column using a steel clamp.

The intervention for rising damp on the wall includes installing repairing damp proof improving course drainage around the building, using less materials, ensuring porous proper ventilation, and regular maintenance to prevent cracks and gaps.

Lack

Fill the damaged area with a repair material, such as stone repair paste. Use shaping tools to shape it when it is not fully cured.

Surface Weathering on the Wood

Use a special wood cleaner to remove mold, stains, and the gray weathered layer from the surface. Sand along the wood grain with sandpaper. Clean the surface dust and apply a protective coating. This is usually made of wood oil or wax.

Cracking

Use a soft brush to clean the dust in the cracks to prevent moisture retention and fungal growth, which will cause the internal decay. If the cracks expand, inject a reversible protective adhesive so that future restorers can identify them.

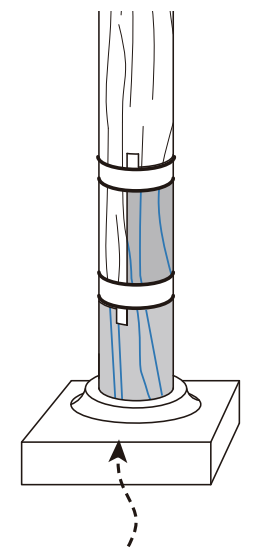


Image 109 Diagram of Column Joint
Source: Hutongs Houses Low Carbon
Renovation Handbook



6. Conclusion

6.1 Research Conclusion

6.2 Research Limitation and Prospects

6.1 Research Conclusion

This study uses the idea of "everyday heritage" as its main theoretical basis. Through systematic literature analysis, international case comparisons, strategy development, and field research, it explores practical ways to protect and renew traditional dwellings today. The study points out that, since many dwellings are not fully covered by the official heritage system, the perspective of everyday heritage, which focuses on daily life practices and community identity, can encourage bottom-up actions by residents. This approach offers new theoretical support and practical frameworks for the protection, activation, and sustainable reuse of traditional dwellings.

First, at the theoretical level, this study reviews the development of official heritage and everyday heritage, and shows their differences and complementary relationship. The official heritage system focuses on materiality, authenticity, and institutionalization, and it relies on expert evaluations and standards to guide heritage protection. In contrast, everyday heritage highlights daily life practices, emotional connections, and community actions, allowing many spaces that are not easily seen by the official system to be rediscovered. The combination of the two approaches may help build a more inclusive heritage framework.

Based on the theoretical research, this paper summarizes a set of feasible restoration strategies for traditional rural dwellings. These strategies include: creating "family memory archives" to rebuild the history of building and daily life; using low-intervention and local materials and techniques to ensure later community-based maintenance; setting up resident participation mechanisms; promoting shared and adaptive reuse models for idle houses; establishing a "house adoption system"; and using digital recording to improve visibility and transparency. The common goal of these strategies is to support a shift from a top-down approach to a bottom-up one, allowing villagers, returning young

people, schools, and other groups to take part in the protection and revitalization of traditional dwellings. This can help change the previous problems such as over-reliance on government leadership, limited resources, and narrow coverage.

To verify the feasibility of the proposed strategies, this study analyzes several representative international cases, including the village of Paralup, the Vrlovčnik Homestead, Casa Clara, and the Lianhua Academy in Guangzhou. The analysis shows several common features. First, they use local material and traditional techniques while following the principle of minimal intervention. Second, they rebuild spatial narratives and living memories to strengthen emotional connection between residents and places. Third, they introduce new functions that fit contemporary life while preserving historical context. These strategies provide useful models for the regeneration of traditional dwellings, allowing heritage protection to combine cultural meaning, social participation, and modern adaptability.

These features indicate that the strategy system proposed in this study aligns well with international experience. It has strong cross-cultural and cross-regional adaptability, and provides solid support for applying these strategies to traditional Chinese dwellings.

Through fieldwork in Liyuanba Village in Sichuan Province, this study further verifies the applicability of the proposed strategies. Liyuanba Village shows typical features of traditional Sichuan villages in terms of natural geography, settlement form, historical development, and ways of life. The field investigation recorded not only building structures, construction details, and facade features, but also residents' daily scenes, spatial usage, and village memories. This helps us understand how traditional dwellings function both as "physical heritage" and "living spaces". These findings show that the restoration of traditional houses must consider the living order and cultural structure behind them.

In conclusion, this study shows that the preservation of traditional dwellings based on the theory of everyday heritage is not a static preservation of traditional spaces, but a dynamic process that emphasizes memory and the continuation of life. This approach not only enriches the theoretical framework of heritage research and architectural conservation, but also provides a path for rural development in contemporary China that carries greater cultural depth and human-centered care.

6.2 Research Limitations and Prospects

Compared with European protection systems, the conservation of traditional villages in China still shows certain gaps. Due to the lack of systematic historical archives, architectural surveys, and academic research, it is often difficult to clearly determine the construction periods and transformation processes of many buildings. In addition, because of time limits and the long distance between the study site and the university, digital survey technologies could not be used for detailed on-site documentation, which makes the current records less complete.

Future research can focus on improving these areas. First, more time should be spent on in-depth fieldwork, including systematic conversations with villagers, craftsmen, and local managers, in order to collect more complete oral histories and practical experiences. At the same time, efforts will be made to work with universities, research institutions, and government departments to build a historical database for traditional buildings.

At the project design level, future work will continue to refine strategies for improving daylighting and thermal performance. The goal is to propose more reasonable and sustainable solutions that create a better balance between cultural conservation, living comfort, and environmental performance.

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