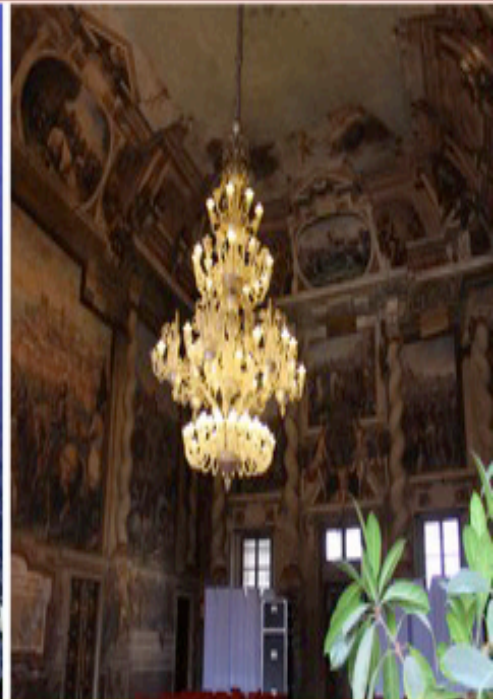


Ph.D Thesis
Politecnico di Torino
Department of Regional
and Urban Studies and Planning (DIST)
Dottorato di Ricerca in "Ambiente e Territorio" (XXVI Ciclo)



The Study on Main Issues of Chinese and Italian Historic Centers' Conservation Based on A Comparative Perspective

Ph.D candidate: Yanfei JIA

Tutor: Prof. G. Cinà, A. Voghera

02-2014



DIST
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Preface

It is the best of times,
It is the worst of times,
It is the age of wisdom,
It is the age of foolishness,
It is the epoch of belief,
It is the epoch of incredulity,
It is the season of light,
It is the season of darkness,
It is the spring of hope,
It is the winter of despair.

----- Charles Dickens

Preface

Our past influences who we are today. If we lose our past, we lose our identity. We just have to hold on to the historic environment. Historic city center, as one part of our past, is described as a treasure chest of works of art, collective memory, ethnic identity and civil life. Then, its conservation¹ has become a vital theme internationally. Facing to a great deal of loose of our heritages, this research is mainly caring about the relative issues of historic conservation in China and Italy, highlights the major ones based on a comparative perspective.

Through the comparison of Italian and Chinese conservations experiences, related to the evolution, the philosophies, and the legislation, we attempted to exploit the gains and loss of each aspect of the both. Then, thanks to some proposals including physical intervention models, social management and conservation procedure design, we want to contribute to trigger a feasible conservation planning suitable for the Chinese context. Also, this research endeavours to point out some proper conservation subject definitions, intervention concepts, misinterpretation and aberrant performing. Further more, a second goal aims to establish a collective sense of "historic environment values" for Chinese against uncontrolled urban transformations.

The value of attractive towns, and civic societies has been acknowledged since centuries in Western countries, but in Chinese it persists a climate full of apathy about the historic city destruction.

Though the historic conservation system has been erected for 30 years, not only most of built spaces but also intangible heritage have been swept away quite completely. As the development and regeneration works in the historic center have the priority, the officers and developers continue their inter-minable cat-and-mouse game. On one hand, the adopted "city-wide" conservation policy shows the ambition of conservation, on the other hand the unintentional or intentional misinterpretations of conservation laws², let always

¹ In Chinese cities' the "Old City" has more or less the same meaning of Western "historic center". Mainly they are referring to the walled and built area before the modernity and industrialization. As Chinese conservation
² The terms of "Repair-type demolition", "Damage-type Restoration" and "preservation-kind demolition" and some other "innovated" terms are a cover to hide a "redevelopment" in the name of conservation. For example, the former residence of Liang Sicheng and Lin Huiyin, who are the founders of Chinese modern architecture and

emerge aberrant performances. This mechanical interpretation has caused disasters to Chinese Culture. Due to the misinterpretation, the conservation subjects are very limited, usually concentrating in the official listed ones. The other historic built environment without the titles can be destroyed arbitrarily. Taking “Baiwanzhuang Community” as an example, as the first Chinese modern community built in 1950s, which has historic, aesthetic and political value, without official acknowledgement faces to demolition. Ironically, this community accommodate several leader of the Ministry of Construction, which is in charge of the conservation.

This research tries to erect the basic awareness of historic element, or environment, official or unofficial, having a unique value that deserves to be conserved. As Anthony Tung argued, to modify the mistakes and dishonesty in “culture of destruction” in 20th century, “can we conceive of an urban environment that is pluralistic but not fractured and schizophrenic? Can we invent a contemporary architecture that is a true cultural expression of modern life, yet relates with respect, with civility, to the architecture of the past? How do we build new life-enhancing environments without simultaneously being destructive?”

Historic environment and its transformation has a millennial dignity as a thinking instrument³, in the form of a critique or in the form of a critical project, it should regain its intrinsic role acknowledged by predecessors.

Wu Liangyong, a Chinese famous planners and architect, and a scholar on conservation and preservation, said, “ historic cities conservation, please cherish the last chance, at the point of historic turning, it is the time”. We face to the challenge of uncontrolled urbanization while we are still lacking a mature conservation understanding and techniques, so we should use the successful experiences as reference to guide our work. To this end we know that:

Italy is well-known for “heritage protection and conservation and the planning for the historic heritage, which given the historic nature of Italian cities, provides a considerable bulk of work where Italy is at the forefront. International comparisons with Italian practice should prove to be stimulating, especially when we are entering an era of reduced resources”⁴.

architecture history, were destroyed in January 2011. The building is famous for its name “Mrs Lin’s living room” where Mrs Lin hosted cultural salon with eminent figures in the early of 1950s. Its destruction in a very shame named “Repair demolition” (wei xiu xing chaichu, 维修性拆除) is just a small evident part of “destructive construction” in China. Though, there was universal anger and criticism on the destruction while they use “repair demolition” as an excuse. Liang and Lin with their colleges had done field surveys around the whole nation, had investigated 1800 historic buildings, had made the construction draws, and numerous rare heritages were protected as a result. But when facing to development, their house could not escape from demolition. But we still face to another problem of in our conservation system. The listed historic relics are very limited, covering but a small part of historic heritage,

³ Krier L., *Rational Architecture*. George Wittenborn Incorporated. *The reconstruction of the city*. Paris: Editions des Archives d’Architecture Modern. 1978. p. 38-42.

⁴ Scattoni P., Falco E., Why Italian planning is worth studying. *Italian Journal of Planning Practice*. Vol. I, issue 1-2011.

Italy, the Bel Paese, is known as the historic and human culture trustee in which the conservation has become an ethic duty in the Italian society. Italian professionals have offered a holistic theoretical apparatus for a wise and civilized system of management of the built world. Italian architects and planners have performed a technical and cultural conservation that has been shaped and stratified during hundreds years, so that the knowledge have become a vital part of the heritage.

The theoretical and practical expertise in Italy provides a verified support of historical, technical, scientific, social and juridical examples for other international contexts, especially the developing countries. So, it is my conviction that the study of Italian conservation would point to some fruitful and beneficial directions for our own country. The Italian city shares some similar characteristics with Chinese's cities - birth in ancient and feudal periods, spontaneous evolution, high density, a rich heritage and a dense fabric⁵, Then the comprehensive Italian conservation experience can provide positive reference for present and future development of Chinese historic conservation, on the field of theory, legislation, analysis, methodologies, intervention modes and management. The theories and cases are too substantive to get the whole appearance, but we can grasp the main rules.

In China the decomposition of the complex spatial continuum of cities becomes ever more evident. The causes of this phenomenon mainly are: the physical damage in wars and political movements; the social impairment given to an uncontrolled modernity; the authoritarian way of political system; the "land-oriented economic mechanism"⁶. This latter becomes even a menace to the whole city fabric. Planners as servile executors of grand speculation have lost their traditional credibility as creators of a better tomorrow. Plus, the prestige of being new, modern, cosmopolitan discredits and replaces the older fragile forms and concepts⁷, in a process of vulgarization where every leader needs to erect a modern symbol of his political achievement.

My study origins from an interesting philosophy paradox, "the ship of Theseus (Theseus's paradox)⁸".

"The ship wherein Theseus and the youth of Athens returned [from Crete] had thirty oars, and was preserved by the Athenians down even to the time of Demetrius Phalereus, for they took away the old planks as they decayed, putting in new and stronger timber in

⁵ Italy has more than 8063 all sized municipalities, among which there are 826 with primary or emergent importance. If we take as reference the 1850s, it can be estimated that there were 2,145,000 historic houses (2600 buildings per city); if the time is 1890, the number rises to 2,664,300. If we just refer to the 800 more important ones there are about 1.8 million historic houses with historic, aesthetic and cultural value (2250 buildings per city).

⁶ China is in a transition from its planned economy to a socialist market economy, during which the government is involved into the economy in a high degree. Depending on the nationalization of land, the land-oriented model is one of three most important models, the local government sells the land to the promoters to earn public budget and then invest on the fixed assets, like the roads and infrastructures. Most cities do not have the tax authority, so the local government depend on selling the land for public budget. This will be discussed in the section 8, chapter 1.

⁷ Fitch J. M., *Historic conservation, curatorial management of the built world*. McGraw-Hill, 1982, p.8.

⁸ It is a paradox that raises the question of whether an object which has had all its components replaced remains fundamentally the same object. The paradox is most notably recorded by Plutarch in *Life of Theseus* from the late 1st century. Plutarch asked whether a ship which was restored by replacing all and every of its wooden parts, remained the same ship.

their place."⁹

Then the ship is entirely substituted, piece-by-piece. Is this existing ship the original or not? Centuries later, the philosopher Thomas Hobbes introduced a further puzzle, wondering "what would happen if the original planks were gathered up after they were replaced, and used to build a second ship. Which ship, if either, is the original Ship of Theseus?" If this paradox was applied into the city built world, it can bring a great deal of inspiration for maintenance, restoration and conservation of our historic heritage. In the Oriental philosophical context, the ship "function" is complete while the material can be substituted when it is necessary¹⁰. But in western countries, considering to the various layers of the heritage values, including the historic, the aesthetic, the ethic ritual value, etc. leads to different way of intervention. So we could try to provide an extension to the Oriental philosophical perspective from abandoning the rude intervention modes.

The task of retrieving, recycling, and curating the historic built environment, by its very nature, synoptic and cross-disciplinary, adopts methods of abstraction and deduction, and cases study for verification. In carrying out the study, I uses observation, document study, individual analysis, expert visiting, summarized-interpret reasoning law separately, comparative analysis, inductive-deductive and methods and other research methods.

The thematic fields of the studied bibliography are: General text on the conservation in international context contains philosophy, legislation and charters etc. General text on the conservation in Italian context includes philosophical views, legislation, planning system, analysis tools and intervention methods etc. General text on the conservation in Chinese context cares about philosophical points, legislation, and planning system, participation and governance feature. Texts on Italian specific case study refer to Bologna, Genova and Palermo etc. Texts on Chinese specific case study involve Beijing, Qingdao, Suzhou, Xi'an, Wuhan, Shanghai and etc.

The whole research has four parts. The first and second part develops a comprehensive study of the cases and theories in China and Italy separately. The third part develops a comparative study of both Italian and Chinese approach to highlight gains and loose, advantages and disadvantages; merits and defects in the conservation work, especially referring to the Chinese conservation. In the fourth part is discussed a synthesis of the physical intervention methods already presented tending to frame some innovative proposal to renovate the Chinese conservation system. This proposal includes a "affiliated conservation" method and a "Procedural Justice" approach to improve the conservation governance, see figure 0-1.

⁹ Plutarch, "Theseus". The Internet Classics Archive. Retrieved 2008-07-15.

¹⁰ The discussion between the author the famous Japanese architecture Kengo Kuma who is good at the wood use in the design. And he tells the author that the complete form is the most important part while the material is not irreplaceable.

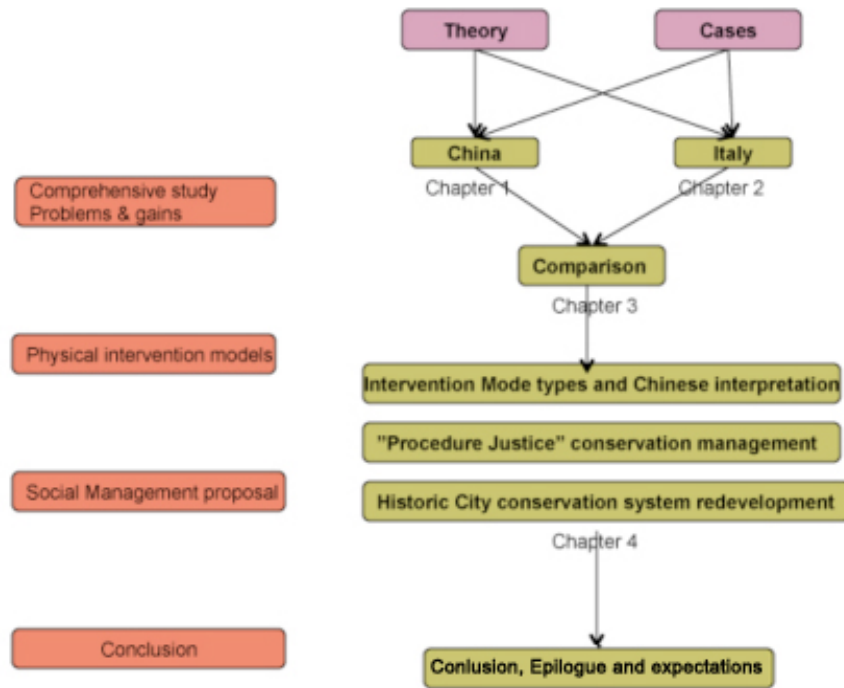


Figure 0-1: the research frame

In conclusion, the research is based on a comparative perspective to form an inductive-deductive study, by which the comparison highlight values and defects of two very significant contexts, China and Italy hence providing a meaningful base for further innovation.

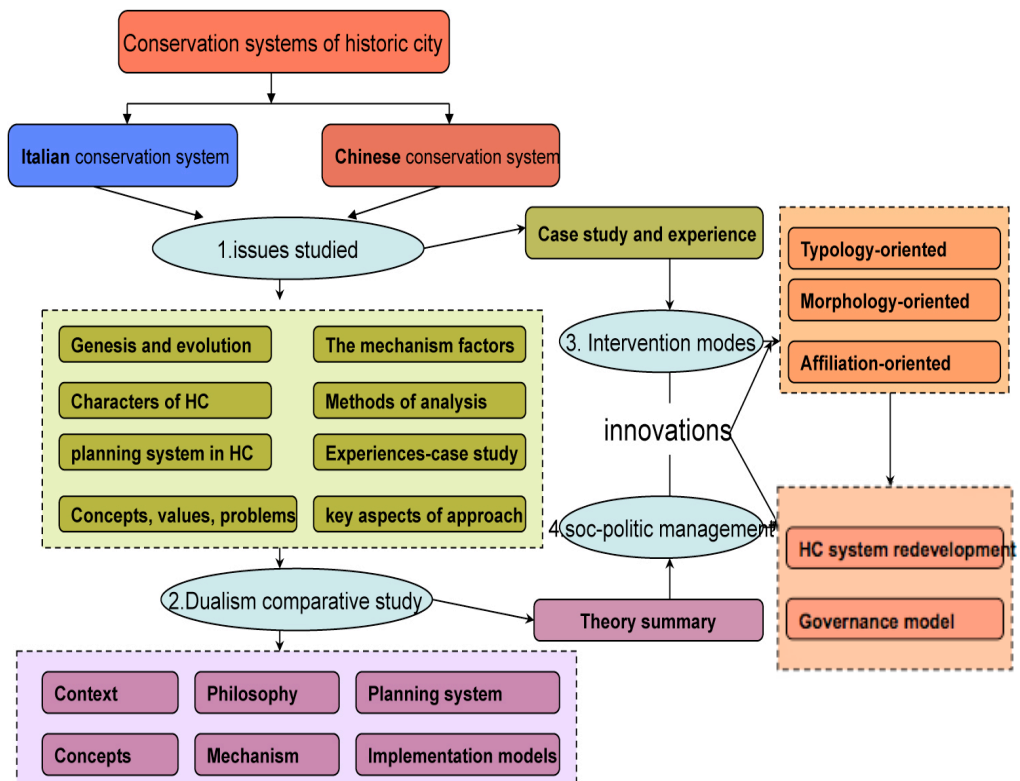


Figure 0-2: the research route

Chapter 1

The Chinese conservation system: history, issues and experiences

“If we were not to study deeply to analyze the custom and habits of people, in order to know their defects and merits, to set up standards for preservation, to choose solutions and methods discreetly, any reforms would be crashed by the habits or just float on the surface temporarily.” ----Lu Xun¹¹.

1. The Chinese conservation system: history, issues and experiences

1.1 Genesis and evolution

According to the Chinese chronology, the evolution of historic city conservation can be divided into **four stages** from 1906 until now. In the first period, historic preservation concepts and thoughts began to emerge. There were some spontaneous conservation exploits but little concrete practical measure. Then, in the second period, most cities developed tardily as the whole nation was trying to recover from the war disaster. Unfortunately the Communist party determined that its chief task to solve was the class conflict, so the political movements such as the campaign to “Destroy the Four Olds” and the “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” brought destruction to historic heritage. Two main destructive factors, sabotage and population expansion, led to destruction of all invaluable historic relics and built environment. Though there were some professionals who appealed for the conservation of historic physical elements, the political context was too brutal to choose a rational course of action. However, during this havoc the seeds of the “city-wide” conservation idea were sown. In the third period, which started in the 1980s, we experienced a frighteningly fast urbanization process that brought greatly destructive damage to the historic center flesh everywhere. The new land-oriented economy established that old houses would be replaced by the lower quality houses or had them recycled for various uses in large-scale “regeneration and redevelopment” projects. Alien architecture types completely substituted the traditional built environment. Along with the loss of cultural richness, some professionals were aware that conservation is a serious issue in urbanization. They introduced positive Western experiences and theories and established a conservation mechanism frame, but they didn’t propose any feasible solution for “governing” the violated behaviors and aberrant implementation. Finally, in the 1990s, the Chinese accepted conservation idea as we realized the unrecoverable value of the irreversible historic loss of our ethnic identity. We started to set up a historic conservation system though we could not resist of the power of market-oriented economy. The “city development model” is in total conflict with basic conservation disciplines. So there are reflection and innovative proposals to redevelop the existing historic conservation strategies, such as in governance, intervention methods and development modes. An outline of the Chinese conservation system evolution can clearly show the main factors of this dilemma.

¹¹ Lu Xun (1881-1936), *Habits and Revolution, Er Xin Ji*, 1930. In *Lu Xun Corpora four*. Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1973.

1.1.1 The silent period (1906-1956)

The expression “silent period” refers to the period that started with the end of the feudal Qing Dynast (1636-1912), the Republic of China (1912-1949) and ended in the early years of the new People’s Republic of China (1949-now). During this time the historic conservation concepts and initial spontaneous practice emerged. Some conservation concepts and practices were introduced from abroad, especially from Japan. A few professionals began to exploit and erect the ethic architecture types and proposed the idea of “ethic image prolongation“. The first laws and decrees about conservation are the following: the first relic conservation decree “Relic Conserving Popularization Methods” 1906, “President’s Command on Prohibition of Cultural Relic Export” (1914), the “Command to Officers of the Provincial Civil Affairs Ministry on Restoration of Prior Dynasties’ Cultural Relics and Sites”, the “Interim Provisions for Restoration of Antique“, the “Historic Site List Report” (1916), the “Restoration Regulation of Historic Sites and Antiques “(1929). The first law on cultural relic conservation, called “Antiques Preservation Law”, was enacted in 1930. Then a group of regulations, such as the “Enforcement Regulation of the Restoration Law of Antiques”, the “Restoration Regulation of City Walls”, the “Organization Ordinance of the Central Committee of Antique Restoration”, and the “Interim Outline of Categories of Antiquity” were promulgated between 1930 and 1935. Initial practice was rare but interesting: for example, the communist party sometimes showed respect for historic environment at the beginning. Communists followed the example of Allied Army aviators when they violated the order to bombe the churches of Cologne. As such the Chinese Liberation Army avoided to fire on the historic architectures listed by the famous architect Liang Sicheng with heavy weapons in order to preserve valuable cultural heritage.

During the World War II and the civil war most Chinese cities still showed features of the old time, as only small parts were destroyed. The laws and decrees mentioned above just called for the “maintenance of relics”, not for true intervention. The definition of “relic” refers only to movable relics, not to buildings and fabric. Because of the limited conceptions and lack of techniques, “conservation” was a meaningless issue at that time.

1.1.2 The sabotage period (1956-1978)

The “sabotage period” refers to the time of violent political movements time between 1956 and 1978, which brought sabotage to all historic heritage but also sowed the seeds of the “city-wide” conservation discipline. After the two wars, the communist party, who claimed that the prime national problem was class conflict, failed in the economic and social development of the country. The dictatorship of the communist party encouraged people to abandon the “obsolete thinking” and to create a new communist image. Unfortunately, this led to a tragic result: the complete destruction of the extant physical heritage, as people showed their loyalty by wrecking all historic elements. This culture “autoclasia”¹² lasted for almost 20 years and reached its peak during the Great Proletarian Cultural

¹² This self-destruction has brought tremendous damage to the Chinese traditional culture, behaviour, ethics, and thoughts, and I would consider it as a kind of ethic culture self-emasculating. People showed their “revolutionary” loyalty by getting involved in the demolition of all historic elements (buildings, paintings, relics and etc.). And more importantly, the traditional behaviours and custom were also lost.

Revolution (1966-1976). This movement demanded the destruction of the “Four Olds”, which included the “old thought, old culture, old custom and old habit”¹³. The central government¹⁴ pushed the “Red Guard” to search for all kinds of ancient heritage (books, handmade articles, ancient structures, memorial arches, temples and so on) and then to crush them down. The young “Red guard” looked for the historical documents from every family and burned them all publicly, for the sake of the cause of “revolution and justice”. The “Red Guard” confiscated the possessions of about 114, 000 families in Beijing and about 10 million families faced to the same fate all over the country. The targets of the Red Guard included all cultural relics and historic sites. There were 6,843 heritage listed by the Beijing municipality government in 1958, but 4,922 heritage were destroyed between August and September 1966, which accounts for 72%. This movement spread the whole country, where it affected the human heritage severely. Entire dominant features of the cities, including context and feature had been lost since then.

The “Destruction the Four Olds” caused fatal damage to the Chinese traditional culture and ethic spirit. The most seriously problem is the damage to the ethos, which cannot be restored for centuries. The Chinese abandoned our traditional custom and behaviors because they considered historical issues as the antithesis of modernity. They were the objects of the “revolution”. Some modern experts and scholars said that the Chinese cultural context of two thousand years has ruptured since then¹⁵. The revolution brought most serious spoilage to the Chinese culture just before it started opening to the world in the 1980s. Therefore, it is clear that authoritarian view was the prime factor for the loss of historic built environment.

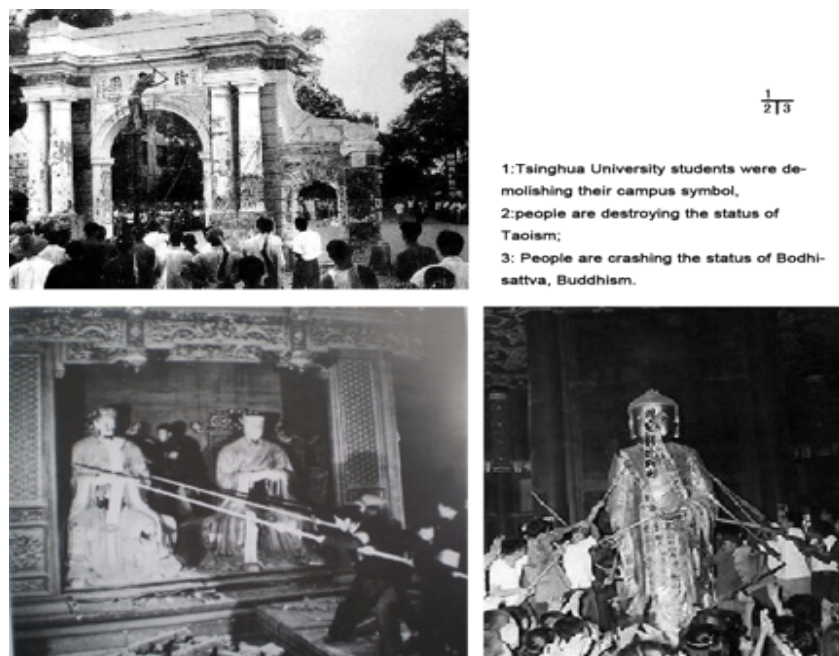


Figure 1-1: the destroy to historic heritages in political movement

¹³ Chen Boda (vice prime minister). “Sweeping off all the evil people of all kinds”. People's Daily Newspaper, 19660601.

¹⁴ The 8-3 Chinese Communist Party Central Committee Caucus. *The decision of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution*.

¹⁵ Chen Danqing, *An interview at the Phoenix Television*, 20110701. See <http://v.ifeng.com/history/wenhuashidian/201107/fdda3ed8-c320-40bf-b58c-6ff40d36e93a.shtml>.

With regards to urban preservation, there was little consideration for both maintenance and “conservation”. Antiquities, including city walls, temples, memorial arches and other kinds of historic goods, were largely destroyed after the Peoples’ Republic of China’s erection. The destruction campaign had political aim and meaning, as the **political willing** was the first factor to trigger the damage. It obeyed the rule according to which new governors have to destroy the former dynasty’s palaces. Heritage was seen as the symbol of feudal thought and capitalist thought, and there was no awareness of preservation at all. Chairman Mao said he felt uncomfortable when he saw old buildings, that the demolitions of the city wall in Jinan (1950) and Nanjing (1956) were good examples and that he wish to see the city full of factory chimneys on the “Tiananmen”. Hence Beijing and other cities were encouraged to demolish their walls, memorial arches and buildings, and then to erect new multi-story housing buildings and factories in historical center areas. Liang Sicheng wept when he appealed to the mayor, who had ordered to demolish the city wall as it limited traffic. Nevertheless, during this great culture disaster, some professionals were able to give birth to the “city-center-wide conservation” idea, through proposals such as Liang Sicheng and Chen Zhanxiang’s suggestions to set new city areas beside the old town of Beijing City. Though this proposal was rejected and the professionals were slaughtered for “their conservative thoughts and ideas of restoration of the old order”, they had laid the foundation for the concept that a city should be conserved at the whole city level, so later professionals could set up the first “city-center-wide” conservation system. We will always have great respect for Liang Sicheng’s foresight and sagacity: when he said that “we would be regret the demolition of city wall and other heritage in 50 years’ time¹⁶”. Unfortunately, he was right.

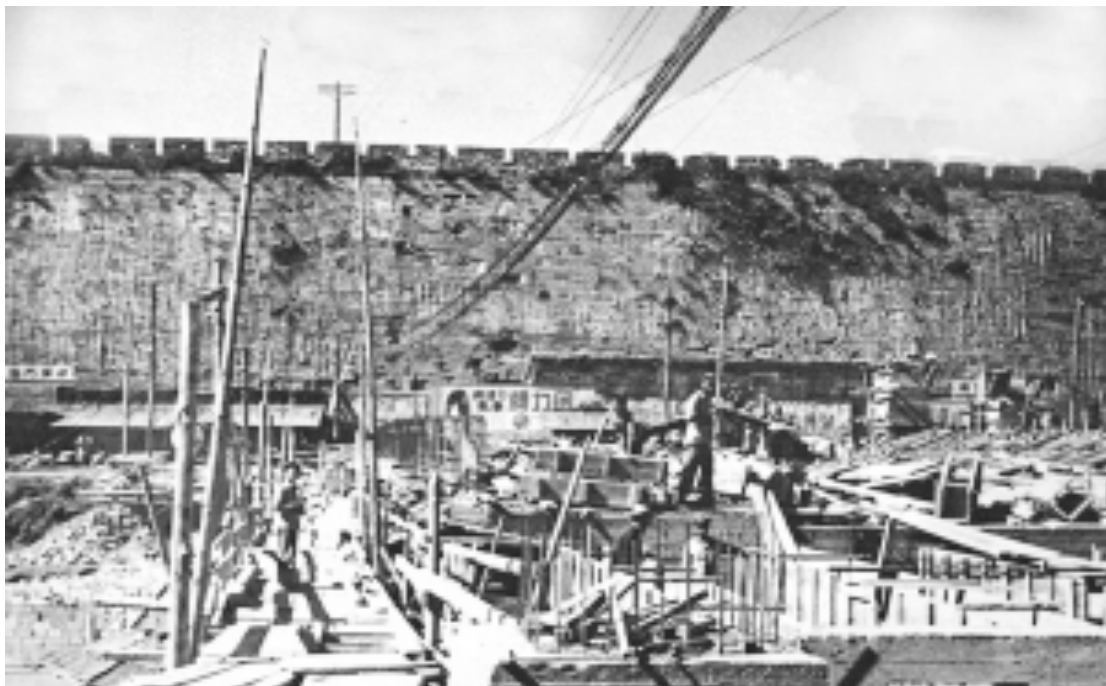


Figure 1-2: the workers were demolishing the city wall in Nanjing, 1956.

¹⁶ Liang Sicheng, *Beijing: an unparalleled masterpiece of urban planning*, in *Liang Sicheng Corpus*, Volume 5. Beijing: Chinese Architecture and Building Press, 2001.

Another factor that had worsened this disaster was **population explosion**. The political leader's claim "more people, more power"¹⁷ led to a dramatic population increasing¹⁸. The number of inhabitants increased sharply with an average 20.48‰ ratio from 1950 to 1992¹⁹. How could the housing needs of such a huge number of people be met? After the serious destruction, a useless class conflict and the arms race of previous years, the country was too poor to build much more housing buildings. There was a grave shortage of houses and public goods. As the communist ideology claimed that all properties belong to the country, in the name of the people, who in fact had no private wealth, the government assigned the existing houses to the people. On the one hand, the government, with the aid of the Soviet Union, tried to demolish and re-build many residential buildings so as to change the context greatly, but these new houses had lower quality from duration, strength and aesthetic point of view. On the other hand, people divided buildings and added some structures to the existing houses in order to accommodate as many people as possible, so this process destroyed the old buildings seriously. In the city centers, most of the quadrangles that used to belong to one family were turned into accommodation for more than 4 families. Some mansions previous belonging to nobilities were divided into tens of units, which exceeded the capacity of the buildings, hence these decayed much more quickly. The political campaign and the excessive population growth had brought an intended damage both to historic elements and to the physical elements.

1.1.3 Urbanization by means of destruction (1978-1992)

After the great political turbulence, economy remained stagnant. Then politicians soon realized the importance of development. Chinese economy reform has triggered a great potential ability. During the fast market-oriented economy growth, which was the very new factor, the destruction of the built environment was caused by a new kind of development model²⁰, the land-oriented model. The regeneration and redevelopment model in historic center areas brought great destruction. After the subversive "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", China started to reform and to open up. Its chief aim was to develop its economy²¹. China chose a unique development way that depended on investments in the real estate: land-oriented economy. Investing in skyscrapers, real estate, roads and schools fuels economic growth and enhances GDP, but it requires to demolish the old and to build the new substantially. Along with the economic development, the need for large living space and modern equipment became very evident. The average per capita living space in Shanghai in 1985 was about 4 m². There was a great lack of the living space in every city so a great deal of financial resources was invested in real estate and the

¹⁷ Mao Zedong, *a conference with some professionals from Beijing's university*, 1956.

¹⁸ Initially there was a population of 0.665 billion people in China, but the number reached 1 billion in 1981. The average growth was about 15 million people per year from 1962 to 1980. There were 0.54 billion people in 1949 and about 0.7 billion in 1960, but 9 years later this figure reached a peak of 0.8 billion. It took only 5 years for the population to increase by 0.1 billion. Then it grew to about 1 billion in 1981 and 1.1 billion in 1988.

¹⁹ China Statistical Bureau *China Statistical Yearbook* from 1949 to 2000. China Statistic Press, 1949-2000.

²⁰ The 14th national conference of the Chinese Party of Communist confirmed that the market-oriented economy would have been adopted and erected.

²¹ "(economy) Development is the absolute principle" was the first principle for the government: development could sacrifice anything, including environmental, historical or cultural elements.

average per capita living space in Shanghai increased to 17.3 m² in 2012²². Especially after the “housing reform” in 1992²³, the transition encouraged private investments in the land market. This way the government could gain great profits by selling the land, which led the government to spare no effort to sell all the land in historic centers. The Chinese fiscal and taxation system aggravated this phenomenon, as the central government gets most of the local tax, but little money returns to the local government. So local government depends greatly on the income from land selling, which is the only resource local governments have for the improvement of infrastructures, roads and other public functions. Land is the prime resource for earning money, so the government encourages to demolish the extant buildings, to relocate local inhabitants and to build new high housing buildings.

During the outburst of the development mode, there were several references. The whole new urban areas of Shenzhen City and Shanghai Pudong District were erected on agricultural areas. Many skyscrapers and modern buildings there show a “modern” image and accelerate GDP increase. It forms a development model: the skyscrapers, modern buildings and large roads are the representation of modernity. Then the application of modern architectural types became popular at a national level because the Shenzhen and Pudong models were seen as the symbol of the success of the communist governance. Most officers visited these areas, and then this model was applied to their own cities, but unfortunately in historic centers, not in new areas. Skyscrapers, new shopping malls, alien public space substituted the previous built fabric, blocks and buildings. Historic environment, which had suffered the great political campaign damage, a huge population overload, arbitrary modification and time change, became the target of redevelopment and regeneration. Moreover, officers wanted to erect their political results by the modern image and GDP increase, so as to push and implement their projects as soon as possible. When Beijing mayor started a project called “Dilapidated Houses Renovation” in 1991, they found a good excuse to replace the historic environment on a large scale, as officers mixed the dilapidated houses with the historic heritage.

The accelerated urbanization was much more evident than ever before, while the average growth rate was about 1.17% since the 1980s, which means that approximately 16 million people flocked to cities and towns every year. Every city had become a construction site and the country had become a laboratory of modern architecture. The application of alien architectural types without any consideration was another factor that caused to the substitution of historic environment. This kind of intervention brought historic centers to an end. The new roads and gated communities replaced almost all the prior morphology and image.

The precise application of modern architecture language brought forth a massive destruction of historical forms in all historic centers of the nation, inducing a global

²² Shanghai Statistical Bureau. *Shanghai Statistical Report 2012*. Shanghai, 2013.

²³ The State Council propagated “Views on promoting the comprehensive urban housing system reform” on 01/01/1992, as a milestone for transition from the assignment mechanism to the market-oriented mechanism, though there still exists some subsidy from the government for the workers.

standardization of the built environment and a general loss of cultural identity. Back in the mid 1980s', scholars and officers influenced by the foreign experience had become aware of the priceless historic value of heritage. Several professors had appealed to the government to conserve the historic identity of the country. Influenced by the Liang Sicheng's theory of a "whole city as the construction art", the State Council established the first group of 24 "Historic Cultural Cities"²⁴ in 1982, and then a second bulk of 38 cities was the same status in 1986. The title of "Historic Cultural City" is a symbol that historic conservation has become an official duty for the city. Historic conservation planning is a compulsory part of the comprehensive planning of the "Historic Cultural City". In this phase, some professors were eager to introduce foreign historic theories and practice. Professor Ruan Yisan saved Pingyao from demolition when he heard that the government had planed to pull down some city walls to facilities. He persuaded the offices and governors to modify the city master plan in 1980. This event initiated the real consciousness of conservation at the city scale in China. Actually though, the status of "Historic Cultural City" is like an honorary title without concrete control over demolition process.

1.1.4 Mechanical application of foreign conservation modes (1992-today)

This period refers to the time during which professors are eager to introduce foreign conservation theories and experience mechanically and to implement those theories without reflection and selection. The misinterpretation of those theories and definitions led to an aberrant practice, including fake antiquities prevalence, the destruction of authenticity for integrity, poor interventions, etc. This mechanical application without checking if the theories were suitable for the Chinese context gives a deviating definition, showing a lack of reflection and dialectic interpretation.

There are some basic and instructional works on historic preservation. Professors Wang Jinghui and Ruan Yisan firstly established a theoretical approach to historic city conservation. The "Historic Culture City Conservation Theory"²⁵ focuses on embedded research of historic city conservation. It discourses on the historic city types²⁶, conservation contents and conservation methods. It also makes an analysis of the native and foreign conservation plans, including many pilot cases and analyses. Zhang Song, who has devoted a long time researching the historic city and engages in lots of projects, published "An Introduction to Integrated Conservation"²⁷ to introduce an integrated conservation method based on the analysis of abroad historic heritage conservation theory. Also other planners have done some research on preservation, though they all care only about some limited aspects. Some focus on the techniques, such as the meaning of authenticity in the Chinese context, some concentrated on the physical decay and reuse of urban space, while some others wanted to rehabilitate the features of some

²⁴ In China the technical terms that "Historic Cultural City" refers to officially identified historic cities. There are 122 "Historic Cultural Cities" at the moment.

²⁵ Wang Jinghui, Ruan Yisan. *Historic City Conservation Theory*. Shanghai: Tongji University Press. 1999.

²⁶ The type categories depend on the city's typical feature, such as "old capitals", "revolution cities", "modern cities", etc.

²⁷ Zhang Song. *An Introduction to Integrated Conservation-a way for the protection of culture heritage and historic environment*. Shanghai: Shanghai technology Press. 2001.

sites, mainly through some cases studies²⁸. The interpretation and elaboration is mechanical without dialectical assessment and evaluation. The theory put up just in the certain cases is not suitable for the diversity of the situation and has limited guide. The mechanical rectification refers to the misinterpretation of the theories, aberrant understanding, compromise in practice, rude intervention, empty legislation articles, fake antiquities in the name of conservation and loosened supervision on the implementation and etc.

Along with the great loss of historic built environment, the urban modern unitary image has triggered an abnormal phenomenon: fake antiquity has gained much more market. From interest standpoint, the governors who have been aware of the economic value of the antiquities started a fanaticism for the construction of fake ancient buildings. As a thematic selling point, the traditional commercial street has gained prevalence in several cities. Governors substitute real streets with commercial streets or completely build new commercial streets in traditional styles, like Beijing Wangfujing Street and Nanjing Confucius Street. Furthermore Fenghuang mayor even announced that they will build a new “Old City” just beside the original one. As MacCannell pointed out the final victory of modernity is not the disappearance of the non-modern world, but its artificial preservation and reconstruction in modern society²⁹.

1.1.5 Brief conclusion

Chinese historic conservation started from scratch! In other terms it started from a total lack of conservation awareness to the positive introduction to the foreign advanced experienced, from demolition works. In historic centers, to the erection of “city-wide” conservation system, from the application of modern architecture types without scruple to the use of fake antiques. Apart from the positive gains, we still face to the great dilemma that misinterpretation of the conservation theories and aberrant embodiment of historic conservation cannot prevent the great loss of the traditional built environment. Poor intervention methods cannot guide a scientific conservation performance. After the endeavor of some professions, in 1982, the government propagated first bulk of Historic Culture Cites, Historic Culture Districts in 1989. Since then, the conservation system has had an evident hierarchy feature—city-wide “Historic Culture city”, medium scale “Historic Culture District” and “historic building” at micro level. Though the city-wide conservation aims to conserve the main morphology, context and main feature; the historic street is the main intervention platform.

The conservation law allows for repairing, modification, renovation and rebuilding without a strict and correct guide on restoration, preservation. Here I have to point out that, the same definition in Chinese context sometimes has quite different meanings compared with the Western context. Though the Chinese choose a city-wide conservation discipline, this refers to the space structure with empty flesh. The definition of built environment has

²⁸ The prior cases are the main references of historic conservation, though there are no subjective assessments of their implementation. So much misinterpretation and aberration are seen as the correct examples.

²⁹ MacCannell. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

not been established yet. Conservation is so mechanical that it cannot control the damage to the traditional fabric. Moreover, official bodies are in charge of the conservation as the public money is invested into the conservation. As the budget is so limited, it cannot meet the need of such a great deal of fabric and it has limited supervision from the public. Conservation planning is compulsory but most conservation plans are too raw and general to give concrete guidance for intervention. As regeneration and redevelopment on a large scale have the priority, conservation plans are mere documents with loose control to space transformation. Conservation plans only care about the space structure, considering features such as the view corridor, the space axis and vital nodes; but the content of the blocks has been completely substituted. The historic areas officially identified are more deeply affected by transformation because little attention is paid to heritage within them, while there is no control on other historic areas which haven't received official acknowledge. For example, in Beijing Old City area the space axis has been preserved, but almost every traditional block has been replaced. Large-scale built environment has been demolished and local inhabitants had to entirely move out. Some conservation projects were inspired by misinterpreted theories and poor intervention methods, so interventions causes heavy damages.

A conservation system has been established, though it has several drawbacks. We should reconsider and redevelop the existing system into a feasible, effective and "normal" one.

1.2 The Chinese conservation planning issues

1.2.1 Chinese philosophical point of view on conservation

If you find yourself in the center of a Chinese city but haven't been told its name, most of the time you won't be able to recognize whether it is Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen or Guangzhou. You are not lost in in a true Chinese city, but in a completely modern one. Today, modern architecture is widespread in China even more than in the Western countries, which are its motherland. China adopted the modern Western civilization paradigm a century after its European cradle and it is experiencing a total westernization both in physical and immaterial lifestyle), which is leading to a great loss of urban identity. In China there is a shallow awareness about preservation concepts, subjects and methods. To get a better understanding that this lack of master of the western preservation approaches, let's consider the Chinese policy and methods of conservation under a philosophical point of view.

The function of the thing has the priority while the physical constitution is secondary. The emergence of this simple dialectical thought dates back to 2000 years ago. "Dao De Jing", which was written by Laozi, says, "thirty spokes are united in one nave, but the use of the wheel depends on its empty space for the axle. Clay is fashioned into vessels, but their use depends on their empty hollowness. The door and windows are cut out from the walls to form an apartment, but their use depends on the empty space. Therefore, what has a positive existence serves for profitable adaptation, and what has not that for actual usefulness"(三十辐，共一毂，当其无，有车之用。埴埴以为器，当其无，

有器之用。凿户牖以为室，当其无，有室之用。故有之以为利，无之以为用³⁰, sanshi fu, gong yigu, dangqiwu, you che zhiyong. Yanzhi yiwei qi, dangqiwu, youqi zhiyong. Zao huyou yiwei shi, dangqiwu, youshi zhiyong. Gu youzhi yiwei li, wuzhi yiwei yong). Existence has a form and its own function, and the form of a thing is seen as the vessel of its function. In the Book of Changes (Yijing, Zhou Yi 周易), attributed to the Confucian school of the end of the Warring States (4th-3rd century B.C.), the part of Xici claims that the way is above form, while below this there is the vessel (形而上者谓之道，形而下者谓之器³¹, xinger zhishangzhe weizhi dao, xinger zhixiazhe weizhi qi). In other words, the material shape is a vessel or container when we see it as a mere thing, but there is some function or ways that exceed the reality of things, the vessel. It can have some function or way that outstrips the reality of the thing itself, of the vessel. These two books Yijing and Dao De Jing have had a great influence on the Chinese ethic spirit, and have laid the foundation of Chinese philosophy. The elements serves to the whole, form is the vessel of the existence. Therefore, the function and the existence is the prime to be maintained, sacrificing the original elements of the part. The palace is the vessel of the kings' life, the symbol of his power: when it was burnt by the lightning, they would rebuild it wholly. According to the traditional mind-set, the new palace is the same as the old one because it has the same name, site, layout, grade and material, so it still "is" the former one.

The form of a thing implies human existence; while material and appearance serve to the existence. This thought has been implied into the life and art intensely. When Zong Bing talked about how to draw the hills and water, he wrote that the hills and the water have the substance (质, zhi), but the interest(灵趣, lingqu) is more vital (至于山水，质有而灵趣³², zhiyu shanshui, zhi eryou lingqu). The landscape is not limited to material forms (形, xing), but it spreads to the spiritual. In painting, the artist stresses the similarities in spirit more than in shape. Existence is not mere the external shape, "waixing" in Chinese. And the meaning of the existence, or its function is given much more importance than its form. The priority of existence leads to another unique convention: the latter facsimile can even gain the same importance as the original subject. Wangxizhi's "Lanting Jixu" ("兰亭集序") has been lost for centuries but latter copies by other famous artists show the same meaning, the same existence. This indicates that the Chinese can get the same meaning from unoriginal material.

This attitude can explain why the Chinese prefer to discard the old forms and to establish new ones. There is little respect to the existing form. They can destroy the old forms easily and rebuild new ones, because in their mind, they have the same value. Meaning and historic value can be peeled off from the old form and re-vested into the new one. The physical forms or shapes are easily abandoned and their function can be represented by building the newly built ones. The Japanese temples of Ise shrine (Ise jingo, いせじんぐう) gives us a contemporary visual example: its buildings are ritually rebuilt with new

³⁰ Laozi. (772 BC - 476 BC). *Dao De Jing, the 31 chapters*. In Xu Yuanchong. *The Old Master Modernized Laws Divine and Human* (Chinese-English Edition). Beijing, High Education Press. 2003.

³¹ Confucian School (4th-3rd century B.C.). *Book of Changes*. In Nan Huaijin. *Discussion of Yi Jing Xici*. Shanghai. Fudan University Press. 2002.

³² Zong Bing (375 AD - 443). *Preface of painting landscape*. Chinese Art Press. 1985.

material every twenty years in their original form, dating at 685 BC (式年迁宫, shinian qiangong). The shape of a building as an objective form in space can be rebuilt, but its function or its existence continues. Existence is the objectified by historical communication between the people and the historical object.

Taoist promotes the importance of existence by introducing a dialectic relationship between the concept “Having Shape” and Not Having Shape. We can read Laozi's sentence, “the great form has no shape (大象无形³³, daxiang wuxing)”. It means that true reality exceeds the visible, material shape of things, as it is believed in Eastern philosophy. The Taoist school advanced the idea of “no-shape-being (无形, wuxing)”, which is viewed as the existence of things. And another philosopher Han Feizi, the Legist School, opposed the “wuxing”, emphasized the material or visible recipient of reality, as substance (质, zhi) of Zong Bing, named “youxing (有形, having shape³⁴)”. But this is less influential than the Taoist concept.

The Oriental culture attaches much more importance to the existence of the cultural heritage, while it neglects the external shape. This easily results in the destruction of palaces, temples, walls and even whole cities. Taking Nanjing for example, the whole city was destroyed six times in history: residential houses, temples, and city walls were burnt down and even water from the lake was channelled to submerge the city. Such a mind-set has directly influenced modern cultural policies, and even more seriously, some officers' perspective, when it comes to conserve some heritage, the first choice is to demolish the old to rebuild a new.

Chinese stresses inheritability and changeability. The consecutive substitution of old buildings with new ones and the replacement of decayed parts with new material is seen as an inevitable process in architectural life. During the life cycle, deterioration is an inescapable fate, so a decayed element would be replaced regularly without any furthermore intervention. The new substitute is entrusted with the same legend, folk story or events belonging to the previous one, hence it felt as the same thing and not a new one. Thus, existence can be inherited through this transition, as inner existence will be kept in the change. The Huang Crane Tower in Wuhan has been erected 7 times, always at the same site and in same building type, and though each building has had quite different stories, its existence as a cultural icon and city symbol remains the same with each transition. The new elements are of the same type, same material and same image to keep the continuity. The change in form and elements serves for the existence inheritability. So the diachronism refers to the existence not the material part, while the physical parts are temporary. The separation between the matter and existence allows that the replacement of the material factors is normal. We can say that physical thing has no synchronic feature as they can be replaced.

³³ Laozi. (772 BC - 476 BC). *Dao De Jing, the 41 chapters*. In Xu Yuanchong. *The Old Master Modernized Laws Divine and Human* (Chinese-English Edition). Beijing, High Education Press. 2003.

³⁴ Han Feizi (280-233BC). *Hanfeizi Yuxiao*. in Zhang Jue. *Hanfeizi Yizhu*. Shanghai Guji Press, 2007. It refers the category which has shape, comes from the small (有形之类, 大必起於小, youxing zhi lei, da bi qi yu xiao).

Chinese approach emphasizes an integrated status rather than a dilapidated status.

Chinese approach states that the unitary existence cannot be divided while the elements sever this “integrity”. Existence is on the base of the unity of the being. So if it emerges some loss of being, it will have a negative influence on its existence: the existing thing will change into another one, the “decayed one”. If we want to keep the “original one”, the only way to choose is to replace the lost parts with new material. In other words, the dilapidated status is not the “normal” status and it cannot contain existence. The “normal status” is the container of existence while the “broken” one is not. For example, the Leifeng tower had lost its several upper floors for almost two centuries. Even the “Leifeng Broken image” had become a famous landscape in Hangzhou, but the “Broken” status was too negative, causing gloomy emotions, which was not its “real” existence. So, they rebuilt a 12-story tower in which the old one is completely involved inside. Hu Xueyan, a famous businessman, owned a courtyard that was greatly damaged and several parts of the buildings had been broken. In its conservation, the unitarity of its layout, the wholeness of the group and the space order were the primary goals to achieve. They first demolished the new modern-style buildings and rebuilt them in the old types, then the dilapidated parts of the buildings were demolished and rebuilt, and they used new materials to replace the decayed parts. More importantly, no special differences were made between the old and the new parts, as all of them were embellished alike, because the designers and officers thought that integration can represent the value of wholeness, while the fragmentation is not the “thing”. In China, designers always prefer integration to authenticity, as wholeness is the “normal” status that contains existence.

Chinese approach emphasizes the connection and relationship. The dialectic relationship between existence and container indicates that the “way” of/for a thing is a collective articulation. Historic heritage at various levels are under united planning and in a fitted order according to ethic rites, artistic methods and cultural habits. The construction of a palace can influence the fate of power; private residents can influence the life of buildings' owners and the city context influences different destinies, while the cemetery site affects the life of descendants. All in a fixed social and ritual order, unimportant parts affiliate with vital ones, while small elements affiliate with the whole. In the second place, change that doesn't destroy existence stresses the link between the past and the future. An unchangeable existence is the junction of the existing parts, while the diachrony of the existence is the connection between old and new. Historic construction logistics also paid attention to the connection between the thing and its neighbouring environment: an aggregation of buildings has an intrinsic relation with its surroundings.

Finally, there is also the philosophy of “old-abandon behaviour”, as the Chinese have an instinctive hatred for the “old”, because it is usually seen as obsolete, discontinued and outmoded. The old is considered as an obstacle to the new, while the new is always the symbol of the vital, good and advanced, so the Chinese perform behaviours summarized

in the following sayings: “no destruction, no construction (不破不立, bupo buli)³⁵”, “exchange the old for the new (除旧更新, chujiu gengxin)”, “great destruction and (hence) great gain(大破大立, dapo dali)”, “discarding the old ways of life in favour of the new (革故鼎新, gegu dingxin)”, “bringing forth the new through the old (推陈出新, tuichen chuxin)”, etc. The conflict between the old and development is very harsh, which has led to preferring demolition and rebuilding. The philosophical points of view provide the disciplines for practical implementation. Diachronic existence allows for change and substitution, and the preference for the complete sacrifice of authenticity has led to an aberrant conservation. The replacement of originals with new ones without evident differences and the complete loss of the former cause a great dilemma in conservation.

1.2.2 Legislation

In the introduction about the evolution of conservation, we have mentioned that Chinese historic conservation legislation originated around 100 years ago. Because of the Democratic Revolution (1912-1937) and the National Revolution (1937-1945), laws and regulations on conservation had little effect. The first decree about cultural relic conservation, “Methods for the Popularization of Relic Conservation (保存古物推广办法, Baocun guwu tuiguang banfa)” was promulgated in 1906. The government required all provinces³⁶ to survey all historical sites and to prepare restoration strategies in 1908 and in 1910 separately. At the end of the Qing dynasty, faced with the challenge of revolution, no concrete implementation was carried out and there was no influence on conservation of relics. Historic conservation had been introduced from abroad, but it had a hollow meaning.

With the advent of the Republic of China (1912-1949), the central government issued a decree, the “President’s Command on Prohibition of Cultural Relic Export (大总统禁止古物出口令, da zongtong jinzhi chukou ling)” in 1914. Then the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued the “Command to Officers of the Provincial Civil Affairs Ministry on Restoration of Prior Dynasties’ Cultural Relics and Sites (为切实保存前代文物古迹致各省民政长训令, wei qieshi baocun qiandai wenwu guji zhi gesheng minzhengzhang xunling)”, which put the Civil Affairs Department in charge of relics maintenance. Finally, the “Interim Provisions for Restoration of Antiques (保存古物暂行办法, baocun guwu zanxing banfa)” was promulgated in 1916. The law established five heritage types: cemeteries of Kings and famous people, to be conserved by the official departments; city walls, buildings, wells and bridges; sculptures and tablet inscriptions; trees; paintings and drawings. The central government also required all provinces to make a “Historic Site List Report (通咨各省调查古迹列表报部, tongzi gesheng diaocha guji liebiao baobu)”. In 1928, Nanjing government set up a central committee for antique restoration and promulgated the “Restoration Regulation of Historic Sites and Antiques (名胜古迹古物保存条例, minsheng

³⁵ Firstly introduced by Han Yu, a famous Culture leader of the Tang Dynasty, this slogan became popular thanks to Mao Zedong, *The discussion on the new democracy*. The People Press, 1952. He says that if we do not break the old, the new will not be established.

³⁶ China is a centralized country that has a unitary system of long history. The hierarchy of the government system includes central government, provinces, prefecture-level cities, counties and towns. The highest-level body has absolute right of jurisdiction.

guji wenwu baocun tiaoli” in 1929. The law enforced 11 rules and divided historic sites into three categories: lakes and hills, architecture and historical remains. Like some other advanced cities, Shanghai carried out the survey of its 29 historic sites. The first cultural relic conservation law was decreed in 1930: “Antiques Preservation Law (古物保存法, guwu baocun fa). It had 14 articles, giving an outline of the relics' boundaries, maintenance, exploitation and exchange, and named the responsible departments. The “Enforcement Regulation of the Law on Antiques Restoration (古物保存法施行细则, guwu baocun fa shixing xize)”, 1931, offered more detailed regulation on the heritage list, on repair and on exploitation issues.

After that, there were a group of regulations and ordinances between 1930 and 1935, such as the “Restoration Regulation of City Walls (保护城垣办法, baohu chengyuan banfa)”, the “Organization Ordinance of the Central Committee of Antique Restoration” and the “Interim Outline of Categories of Antiquity (暂定古物的范围及种类大纲, zanding guwu de fanwei ji zhonglei dagang)”. The education bureau was in charge of the implementation of these laws with the help of the public security bureau.

These decrees and regulations aimed to define the term “antiquity”, to establish antiquity types, to carry out surveys in order to create an antiquity list and to entrust official bodies with the responsibility of their conservation. However, these regulations didn't suggest any concrete conservation method or implementation strategies. The early laws and regulations were meant to define how to preserve, to save and keep antiquities, but they didn't have any positive effect on interventions. Firstly, they paid too much attention to single historical goods, such as calligraphy and painting, pottery, statues of Buddha, bronze implements and other movable antiques. There was no awareness of large-scale conservation of the layout and context of the city, so the scope of maintenance was narrow. Secondly, even if there were several central committees which regulated conservation, implementation was limited: no designated official body was in charge of conservation issues. The education bureau's main responsibility was to organize education, so conservation kept on being neglected. There never was a real implementation because of the lack of funding and professional skills³⁷. The Republic institutions' lack of implementation capacity, exacerbated by World War II and by the civil war, made conservation as an empty concept.

As first attempts, some institutions, such as the Society for the Study of Chinese Architecture (1929-1946), carried out valuable field surveys on historical architecture. Their research focussed on the architecture types established according to various architectural features and periods, then it gathered first hand material for future conservation. Many excellent professions, such as Liang Sicheng, Liu Dunzhen, Lin Huiyin and etc., gave birth to the Chinese modern architecture subject and pointed out historical differences in architecture. In this period, some foreign architects tried to reconstruct the original Chinese architectural styles and rehabilitate them. Among those architects, there was Henry K. Murphy, who made the “Capital Master Plan” for Nanjing in

³⁷ Ruan Yisan. *The conservation of Chinese Historic Cities*, Antiquity, 67, 1993.p.850.

1929 and then designed Jinling University, Jinling Women's University and Yanjin University in Chinese styles mixed with Western aesthetic views. Another important figure was Kales, who designed Wuhan University between 1933 and 1936, combining the Chinese traditional architectural style with Western Romanesque and Byzantine to achieve perfect and organic integration of architecture and natural environment. It was the first application of Chinese architectural types, when Murphy proposed to "use the Chinese types to create the new Chinese city"³⁸. Also some efforts were made to adopt the modern western architectural techniques into the Chinese ethnic construction features.

After a long-standing colonial rule and many wars, it came for the new era of the People's Republic of China (1949). The first decrees "Indications on the Preservation of Historic Cultural Architecture (关于保护古文物建筑的指示, *guanyu baohu gu wenwu jianzhu de zhishi*)" and the "Interim Procedures for Historic Ruins and Cemeteries' Survey and Excavation (古文化遗址及古墓葬之调查发掘暂行办法, *gu wenhua yizhi ji gu muzang zhi diaocha fajue zanzheng banfa*)" in 1950 proposed to "save the heritage's original appearance' and not to change it without permission". Then guidance was offered for maintaining and saving heritage during city construction and agricultural development by the "Guide to the conservation of historical and revolutionary heritage in basic construction (关于在基本建设工程中保护历史及革命文物的指示, *guanyu zai jiben jianshe gongcheng zhong baohu lishi ji geming wenwu de zhishi*)", in 1953, and the "Guide to the conservation of historical heritage in agricultural production and construction (在农业生产建设过程中关于文物保护的通知, *zai nongye shengchan jianshe guocheng zhong guanyu wenwu baohu de tongzhi*)", in 1956. After that, the "Interim regulation on antiquities conservation management (文物保护单位暂行条例, *wenwu baohu guanli zanzheng tiaoli*)", published in 1961, established the first bulk of 180 National Antiquities. Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture issued the "Interim regulation on the preservation of revolutionary memorial buildings, historical memorial buildings, historical buildings and temples (革命纪念建筑、历史纪念建筑、古建筑、石窟寺修缮暂行管理办法, *geming jinian jianzhu, lishi jinian jianzhu, gu jianzhu, shikusi xiushan zanzheng guanli banfa*)" in 1963.

The last two decrees ruled that all the listed antiquities should be "restored to their "original appearance (原状, *yuanzhuang*)" or maintained in their status quo". Conservation was entrusted to the State Culture Department, whose various levels were officially instituted. The three hierarchical levels of the antiquity list system were established then. In 1982 the first antiquity conservation law, the "Antiquity Conservation Act (文物保护法, *wenwu baohu fa*)", was promulgated by the State Council, re-attaching importance to the conservation of historic heritages Valuable and memorable buildings and remains related to revolutionary and vital events, as well as the materials, which represented the ancient and ethnic social organization and life, could be officially listed as historic heritage. According to a hierarchical order, heritage was granted the title of National Heritage, Provincial Heritage, Municipal Heritage or County Heritage. Historic areas (including cities, districts and buildings) which could meet the requirements in the laws mentioned above, should be treated as heritage, and accordingly they could be called Historic City (or Town,

³⁸ Murphy H. K., *An interview by New York Time*. 1944.

Village), Historic Area and Historic Building. Hence, a national inventory, provincial inventories and municipal and county inventories were created as well. The duty of heritage conservation was entrusted to heritage institutions and departments, but they didn't have the power to make plans nor to regulate construction behaviour. In the new "Antiquity Conservation Act" issued in 2002, four principles are enunciated: "to give priority to conservation, to give first place to the safeguard of heritage, to make rational use of antiquities and to strengthen their management". The law also distinguished three layers of historical heritage to be conserved: the historic monuments and sites per se, the outer construction-controlled area and the feature coordination area. In the last area the penalty for offence is limited only to civil liability. The highest fine is ¥500,000 (almost \$ 70,000). Compared with profits that could be gained by breaking the law, it is a kind of encouragement for developers to destroy heritage without any fear of punishment.

After experiencing turbulent political movements, numerous great historical buildings disappeared. Urban planning regained a primary role during the economic development. In 1984 the State Council issued the "Urban Planning Regulation" (城市规划条例, guowuyuan chengshi guihua tiaoli), which initially set up the urban planning procedure. Firstly, it established that conservation is a part of the master plan, including "inheriting Historic Cities' historic and cultural features, delimiting the conservation boundary and construction controlling area (article 16)". It was a kind of basic principle for guiding the conservation planning. Then in 1989, the previous bylaw evolved into the "Law of Urban Planning (城市规划法, chengshi guihua fa)", which did not mention conservation at all, but proposed to protect historic cultural heritage, urban traditional features and local characteristics (article 14). Most new construction was carried out on historic centre areas, because of the convenient site and abundant infrastructures. Since the 1990s Chinese cities have experienced overt expansion and redevelopment along with economic development. So, in the name of modernization, conservation was neglected, while legislation was too loose to control the destruction caused by new construction.

Then, after 30 years of high-speed urbanization practice and reflection, the 1989 law was modified and in 2007 it became the "Law of City and County Planning (城乡规划法, chengxiang guihua fa)". First of all, it gave a clearer regulation on city conservation: for example, article 4 set to preserve historic cultural heritage, while article 17 made conservation a compulsory part of the master plan. The law required following the Historic City conservation laws in order to carry out a rational regeneration and maintain traditional features. Anyway, the urban planning laws only put forward the task of conservation in very basic terms: in China urban conservation has always been seen as an obstacle to modernization. Though the law went on to deepen the relationship between old urban area regeneration and historic conservation in depth, it didn't solve the contradictions between regeneration and conservation. More seriously, the construction and planning power was entrusted to Planning Departments and institutions, while the Construction Department was put in charge of the compiling, assessment and implementation of conservation planning. The Culture Department could not control violation and aberrant performance, though they had the power to assess and value what is heritage.

“The Urban Purple Line Management Measures” (城市紫线管理办法, chengshi zixian guanli banfa) were issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban-rural Development in 2004. The Purple Line is the boundary of conservation areas. This boundary includes the Development Control Area and the Coordination Area to ensure that intact feature and townscape are kept intact. Public institutions should monitor the boundary, but the 2004 regulation did not indicate how public participation should be carried out. Anyway, it allowed for the historic area to gain an independent role in the land uses. In this bylaw we can clearly see the contradictions of Chinese official attitudes towards conservation issues. Article 13 prohibits large area demolition, redevelopment and re-construction that would destroy traditional features. Literally, it strictly prevents any new construction inside the boundary, but it allows to erect new buildings “that do not influence the feature”, which usually permits officers to build fake historic buildings. This is because development can increase the GDP, while conservation cannot!

Influenced by the Washington Charter of 1987, “The Urban Purple Line Management Measures” defines the principles, objectives and methods necessary for the conservation of historic towns and urban areas. The law also seeks to promote the harmonization of both private and community life inside these built areas and to encourage the preservation of cultural properties. The “Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities (GB 50375 – 2005, 历史文化名城保护规划规范, Lishi wenhua mingcheng baohu guihua guifan)” proposes three conservation principles: to preserve the historic original appearance; to restore the historical environment; to reuse reasonably and in a sustainable way. It sets a conservation system based on three levels: Historic Cultural City, Historic Conservation District and listed Monuments and Sites.

This code defines the concept of intervention and sets the main subjects of conservation, such as the boundary (development control area, coordination area), height control, traffic organization, facilities, disaster control and environment protection. The creation of a listing mechanism involves the need for an inventory of valuable historical buildings. However, the drawbacks of this bylaw are evident. Firstly, the limited public resources cannot be used for heritage non officially listed. So, the officially approved categories have a negative side-effect: it is easy to neglect the valuable historic buildings not listed and also demolish them. Secondly, the Code allows for misinterpretation of what maintenance, preservation, conservation and restoration are; also, it misunderstands some definitions about intervention, such as repair, patch, embellishment and renovation as conservation concepts³⁹. Thirdly, the articles have a content of principle, lacking any operational methodologies. In article 3.1.5, for example, it is proposed that conservation should preserve the traditional layout and the townscape and that historic area and buildings should be repaired and rehabilitated, which are exactly the same words used in the previous laws and regulations, but no words about concrete, feasible intervention ways are introduced. Then it goes on to discuss how to modify function, to control population growth, to reorganize traffic, to renew facilities, to propose the implementation

³⁹ Ministry of Construction. *Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities*. 2005

and management stage and to define some criteria, such as height, size, colour and form. This law has given more specific regulation about the conservation subjects, but it also is a too basic guide that lacks of methodologies on interventions and analysis. The law mainly cares about development, not conservation, and regulates the future change but not the interventions for heritage protection.

The State Council granted the Historic City, Historic Town and Historic Village Conservation Rules in 2008 (历史文化名城名镇名村保护条例, lishi wenhua mingcheng mingzhen mingcun baohu tiaoli). It is the first national bylaw to give concrete guidance on conservation. The law is meant to contain conservation policies, boundaries, intervention methods, developing criteria, requirements for the preservation of the layout, features and periodical steps (article 14). It casts attention on maintaining the relationship between environment and historic areas. It allows new construction under specific requirements. Article 27 asks to carry out various interventions depending on the buildings and states that historic buildings should keep their height, bulk, appearance, colour, etc. The historic buildings are included in a special archive, where their main characteristics are described. But against article 14, article 28 prohibits any new construction and expansion, though regulation on construction criteria is addressed in the previous articles! Article 28 allows too much flexibility to the practice which cannot effectively prevents construction damage and offers concrete and definite guidance to intervention. It gives somehow basic conservation policies and methods, but it is still too general and vacuous.

The above presented laws and regulations are the national ones. Moreover, each province and municipality has promulgated some bylaws and rules in order to implement those laws according to their own situation, such as the “Shandong Province Historic City Conservation Regulation (山东省历史文化名城保护条例, shandong lishi wenhua mingcheng baohu tiaoli, 1997)” and the “Beijing Historic City Conservation Regulation (北京市历史文化名城保护条例, Beijing lishi wenhua mingzhen baohu tiaoli, 2005)”. The Beijing Historic City Conservation Regulation is almost the same as the Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities, as it doesn't suggest any more specific and actual guidance to the municipal conditions. Conservation subjects include rivers and lakes, the traditional axis, the Forbidden City, “凸” “Old City” wall form, historic streets, quadrangle and lane layout, height, landscape line, scenic focal point, colour and old trees. Though it sets the prohibition to change the lane and quadrangle layout, we know that a great loss of such layout has been experienced. The punishment for the violation of the law is too low to prevent demolition. In Beijing, the highest fine is 200,000 RMB (\$32,000), while in Qingdao it is 1 million RMB (\$160,000), which anyway is far lower than the interests of real estate.

The Historic Area Conservation Management Rule (历史文化街区保护管理办法, Lishi wenhua jiequ baohu guanli banfa) and the Historic Town and Village Conservation Management Rule (历史文化名城名镇名村保护管理办法, lishi wenhua mingzhen mingcun baohu guanli banfa) were issued in 2010. They establish that in the repair of buildings, any change to the outer appearance, size and feature is allowed. The buildings around

the historical ones should be modified in order to harmonize with them. These laws are a supplement to the Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities.

Time	Name	Main issue	Effects and notes
1906	Methods for the Popularization of Relic Conservation	Basic research on the historic relics	About "historic" heritage, basic introduction of the conservation topic
1914	President's Command on Prohibition of Cultural Relic Export	Prohibition of the illegal export of movable heritage	Awareness about relics' value and about movable relics; Civil Affairs Departments were put in charge, official task erection.
1916	Interim Provisions for Maintenance of Antiques	Requirement to exploit and maintain	Five Types of Antiques, recommended departments for their conservation, list
1929	Restoration Regulation of Historic Sites and Antiques	Types and list	Three types, basic list
1930	The Antiques Restoration Law	An outline of the relics boundary, maintenance, exploitation and exchange, and responsible departments.	Conservation is guaranteed by the legislation
1931	Enforcement Regulation of the Antiques Restoration Law	More detailed regulation on the heritage list, repair and exploitation issues	More instructions than in the previous one
1950	Indication on the Preservation of Historic Cultural Architecture	"Original appearance" maintenance and report to the ministry department	The original appearance has no clear definition. Whether it refers to the "status" of when it was abandoned or to the time when its preservation was decreed, it is not clear.
1950	Interim Procedures of the Historic Ruins and Cemeteries' Survey and Excavation	"Original appearance" maintenance	
1961	Interim Regulation on Antiquities Conservation Management	Restoration to the "original appearance" or preservation of the status quo	
1963	"interim regulation on the preservation of revolutionary memorial buildings, historic memorial buildings, historic buildings and temples		
1982	Antiquity Conservation Act	Definition, hierarchical antiquity list system, restoration of the "original appearance"	Historic city and district are viewed as a kind of antiquity,
1984	Urban Planning Regulation	As one part of the master plan, including "inheriting Historic City	Conservation is a compulsory part of comprehensive planning

		historic and cultural features, delimiting the conservation boundary and construction controlling area	
1989	Law of Urban Planning	Proposes to protect the historic cultural heritage, urban traditional features and local characteristics	Conservation is not a compulsory part of comprehensive planning
2002	Antiquity Conservation Act	Principles: to give priority to conservation, to give the first place to the safeguard, to make use of antiquities rationally and to strengthen their management	Boundary, three space layers
2007	Law of City and County Planning	Suggests to carry out regeneration rationally in order to maintain the traditional features	Conservation is a compulsory part of comprehensive planning
2004	The Urban Purple Line Management Measures	The historic district has a fixed boundary, as an independent land use.	
2005	Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities	Three conservation principles, three historic layers, list mechanism, especially the "Historic Districts" are the main conservation subjects.	Negative side-effect: lack of operable concrete methodologies and misinterpretation of intervention definitions
2008	Historic City, Historic Town and Historic Village Conservation Rules	Authenticity and integrity are the two main aims in conservation	
2010	Historic District Conservation Management Rule	Historic District becomes the main conservation subject.	City-wide conservation, always performed at the district level.
2010	Historic Town and Village Conservation Management Rule	It is not allowed to change outer appearance, size and feature. The buildings around the historic ones should be modified to coordinate.	
1983	Announcement on Strengthening HCC Planning	Distinction about the power to bestow authorization between the cultural relics office and the construction office	Conservation should be part of the master plan
2012	Temporary Drawing Rule of Historic City, Historic Town and Historic Village Conservation planning	About the plan compiling	Technical document
Table 1-1: Main national laws, decrees and regulations			

At the local government level, every municipal and provincial council issues various bylaws and regulations to implement the higher-level laws, according to its basic situation. For example, Qingdao and Chengdu promulgated the 'Urban Townscape Conservation Management Rule', in which the historic area and buildings are seen as a townscape resource to be conserved.

In conclusion, the creation of the legislation system has produced several advantages. Firstly, China has promulgated a series of regulations to set up a conservation mechanism which exerts profound evident official hierarchy characteristics. Historic City, Historic District and Historic Building are the three levels of the conservation mechanism. Secondly, Chinese political bodies have issued several laws and regulations to implement conservation from the upper central government to the local municipal office. The Culture Department carries out the identification of the historic value, while the conservation and construction work is entrusted to the Planning Department, which is in charge of the conservation plan compiling and performing. The government sets a financial budget for the conservation work. Thirdly, the conservation plan is a compulsory part of the master plan, which should pointedly outline the conservation subjects, boundary, the criteria aspects, basic disciplines, etc. However, most of the time local planning remains at a general level, with unclear articles. Fourthly, legislation stresses the lasting features and physical intervention. Literally, conservation is mainly about physical repair and maintenance, without any consideration of the social issues. Legislations try to cut down the number of people inhabiting in historic areas so that social events will die away. Fifthly, authenticity and integration are the two main aims of conservation. Interventions should exert an evident difference with the existing surrounding. Sixthly, the conservation system adopts a city-wide conservation discipline. Lastly, there are punishments for violation and aberrant implementation. All of this provides an overall platform for intervention.

We have to point out that there are also several defects in the legislation. Firstly, the conservation legislation provides obscure definitions of the interventions, misinterpreting the Western concepts. Hence, there give ambiguous and general guidelines. Most of the articles usually remain at a too general level, including the setting of aims, contents, boundaries and standards. The basic conservation task is outlined, but no tangible addresses are given in the analysis method, such as how to set boundaries and how to implement interventions. Secondly, it is possible to intervene on the three conservation space layers at various levels of methods, but there are no specific instructions about the differences in each area, conservation core area, coordinated area and etc. Thirdly, because of the division of power (tiaokuaifenge, 条块分割), the Heritage Department lacks the power to advice or to regulate on the Planning Department's the works of demolition. The Construction Department's main aim is to make urban redevelopment without a true intention to constrain its influence. After the great loss of the traditional features and historic buildings, none of the 122 Historic Culture Cities has been stripped of its title. Fourthly, the un-academic terminology makes conservation more difficult to understand. The "original appearance" is the basic aim of conservation, but there is no specific explanation of what original appearance it is. Whether it encourages to restore

antiquities to their “normal status” or to maintain the existing status, is quite hard to discern. Integration encourages planners to design fake parts of the existing buildings. Moreover, “integration” is another unclear term: it may refer to the contemporary status or to the initial status when the heritage was produced. The latter use is always prevalent in practice. Fifthly, there are contradictions and equivocal rules, as conservation laws were compiled on the basis of development and regeneration. While they prohibit any new construction in order to maintain the existing townscape, there are many articles about how to set new construction sites, how to set the height, size, form and colour of the new buildings to “coordinate with the existing ones” and they advocate to the relocation of historic buildings. “Conservation” then allows new construction in historic areas. Sixthly, the conservation system forbids public participation in the conservation work, but private actors are not encouraged to perform conservation work. Last but not least, the conservation system is passive and static: interventions proposed in the laws and regulations are meant to keep the status quo, but in a simple way, that is by demolishing or by freezing them all. Planners always treat heritage as only a material entity, they are not able to use a flexible perspective to design.

1.2.3 Historic conservation system and planning contents

As the only subject of conservation, single-heritage-oriented conservation was performed till 1982. It initially appeared in the Chinese autocratic governance context, through reenactment of legislation and adjustment of administrative systems and lasted from the beginning to the end of the last century. The enactment of the “Cultural Relics Preservation Act” (later modified in 2002 and 2007) was the milestone of a kind of fully established monument-oriented heritage conservation. The local Cultural Relics Office is in charge of surveying, listing, evaluation and conservation (Article 8). The Historic Culture City became an officially conservation subject in 1982. Cities with affluent relics of relevant value or revolutionary meaning could be entitled “Historic Cultural City (HCC)⁴⁰” (Article 14) and 24 cities were publicized as the first bulk of historic cultural cities in 1982. The whole city becomes thus a conservation subject!

A city-wide historical city conservation system was established along with the monument-oriented heritage conservation performing. Influenced by the Washington Charter of 1987, heritage conservation expands from heritage *per se* to its neighbouring area and to the whole group of built environment. The historic district, as a bridge between the city and heritage, becomes the second level subject of conservation. Then the term “historic area (district) conservation” was mentioned for the first time when the State Council recognized a second group of 38 Famous Historic Cultural Cities in 1986. The first historic district conservation regulation emerged in 1997 from the “Huangshan Tunxi Historic District conservation planning”, then the “Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities” was officially confirmed in 2005.

⁴⁰ Literately, the title should be translated as “Historic, Cultural, Famous City”, but this emphasizes the idea of “famous”, so according to the “Standard for Basic Terminology of Urban Planning” (GB/T 50280—98), it is translated as “historic city”, which however does not cover the full connotation of its concept. The term “Historic Cultural City”, HCC in short, is much more academic and objective.

The hierarchical historic conservation system consists on three-level: the general city-wide Historic Culture City, the medium Historic Culture District and the micro Historic Listed heritage. Though the whole city retains the official title, it does not mean that all its elements are to be conserved. The Historic Culture City term mainly refers to its space pattern, construction feature, space axis and corridor, and main historic physical elements. It is a kind of honorary title, not necessarily corresponding to a concrete policy. It has no conservation area, construction area and feature-coordinated area. Historic Districts and single heritage elements are the main subjects of conservation.

According to the practical implementation, the three levels of conservation have various roles. The Historic Culture City Conservation Plan is a general outline of the city conservation. It sets the aims, contents, criteria, boundaries and proposals, including maintaining the traditional space pattern, choosing the historic districts, heritage, historic buildings, traditional buildings and other historic elements listed. The plan sets up basic construction criteria and proposes requirements for intervention and regeneration. It hardly gives concrete guidance for space intervention, but it provides the frame for further work at medium and micro levels. It also establishes the city-wide conservation frame, but it only cares about the official subjects. The Historic Culture District Conservation Plan is the main platform for conservation. It defines the tangible boundary of the district *per se*, the construction control area and the feature coordinated area; The plan sets the various types of buildings that are the objects of intervention and applies repair, improvement, renovation and regeneration pointedly⁴¹. Also control criteria are applied, such as height, mass, appearance, colour and materials.

The “Announcement on Strengthening HCC Planning (关于加强历史文化名城规划的通知, guanyu jiaqiang lishi wenhua mingcheng guihua de tongzhi)” was promulgated by the Ministry of Urban and Rural Construction and Environment Protection (later named Ministry of Construction, and then Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development) in 1983. It assigned the authorization power between the Cultural Relics office and the Construction Office. Historic city conservation has become an issue of urban planning supervised by the Construction Office, while the protection of relics has been assigned to the Cultural Relics Office. The Culture Department along with the Construction Office carries out surveys to evaluate heritage and districts and to award them the title. However, the Construction Office has more resources and power to compile plans and to set the intervention methods and implementation. Therefore the Culture Department has no power to control and to guide the construction branch in the Chinese governmental system⁴². Now we will see some tangible cases, most of which are conservation plans approved by the government, in order to have a deeper look at regulations besides the literal meaning of articles of the laws.

A valuable summing up experience, positive or negative, upholds the truth and corrects mistakes. In 2012 the “Temporary Drawing Rule of Historic City, Historic Town and

⁴¹See the various aspects in table 1-3 to 1-5, and then various interventions will be proposed accordingly.

⁴²See part 1.8 for more information about the power division and its embodiment in the Chinese political system.

Historic Village Conservation Planning (历史文化名城名镇名村保护规划编制要求(试行), lishi wenhua mingcheng mingzhen mingcun baohu guihua bianzhi yaoqiu (shixing)”) was promulgated. As a basic technical document, besides containing exactly the same articles as higher-level regulations, such as the principles, contents, aims and tasks of other laws, it provides some further practical guidelines, especially about the material compilation of plans. In the survey part, buildings are divided into four categories: historic buildings, traditional feature buildings, traditional cooperative buildings and traditional uncoordinated buildings, according to their features, age, quality and height. In terms of conservation of historic city, town, or village, it casts attention on the traditional layout, townscape, sight corridor, skyline and height, particularly on the features as a whole, or townscape. In other words, the bylaw cares about the physical characteristics but it neglects the social and economical elements.

The “Temporary Drawing Rule of Historic City, Historic Town and Historic Village Conservation Planning” contains three parts, “Text”, “Drawings” and “Appendix”, which contain planning instructions, materials and assembler. The Text is the interpretation of the laws' requirements, while the “Drawings” section includes the analysis drawings of the status quo, such as morphology, site and traffic, land use, sight corridor, existing buildings (1:500-1:2000) and the planning drawings, such as boundaries, height control, sight corridor, buildings intervention categories, function distribution and facilities.

Anyway, according to most of the analysis of conservation planning, the prior analysis lacks the scientific tools to give a high-quality description and therefore cannot give concrete guidance for future intervention.

The tables 1-2 to table1-6 show the analysis of elements' status quo in the planning process, including the analysis of buildings' historical value, qualities, features and building types. On basis of analysis of the features of the status quo, the land use, boundaries, then it proposes intervention ways.

Layer	Name
Before the Ming Dynasty (1644)	EL-N1
Qing Dynasty (1644-1911)	EL-N2
The Republic of China (1911-1949)	EL-N3
1950s -1979	EL-N4
From the1980s	EL-N5
Table 1-2: dates of the buildings' status quo	

Categories	Layer	Name
Good	The main structure is entire, basic accessories and facilities are complete	EL-Q1
General	The main structure is common and the accessories are common too, the basic facilities are not complete	EL- Q2
Bad	The main structure is bad, the maintenance is lacking and so are the basic facilities	EL- Q3

	Green areas	EL- Q4
	Water	EL- Q5
Table 1-3: quality of the buildings' status quo		

Layer	Name
1-floor building (or with attic)	EL-H1
2-floor building	EL-H2
Low building (3 to 4 floors)	EL-H3
Multi-floor building (5 to 6 floors)	EL-H4
Low high-rise building (7 to 11 floors)	EL-H5
High-rise building (more than 12 floors)	EL-H5
Table 1-4: height categories of the buildings' status quo	

Categories	Criteria	Name
I	Historic buildings and sites	EL-V1
II	Ancient buildings	EL- V2
III	Traditional feature buildings	EL- V3
IV	Traditional feature cooperative buildings	EL- V4
V	Traditional feature uncoordinated buildings	EL- V5
	Ancient trees	EL- T
	Traditional lanes and streets	EL- L
	Mountains, hills	EL- G
	Lakes, water	EL- V5E
Table 1-5: features and cultural value of the buildings and other historical factors		

Categories	Intervention
I	Conservation
II	Repair
III	Improvement
IV	Maintenance
V	Rehabilitation
Table 1-6: various intervention proposals	

1.2.4 Technical tools

Physical intervention is the basic tool for conservation and management of heritages, as it can represent a solution to the continuous urban growth and development and be embedded in policies and strategies for the conservation and renewal of the old and historic areas⁴³. According to the laws and practice, Chinese conservation extravagantly depends on material renewal and re-building. In table 1-6 only five interventions are

⁴³ Abdelhamid A. S., *Physical planning as a tool for the conservation and management of cultural and natural Heritage in the Palestinian territories*. International Conference "Conservation & Management of landscape in Conflict Regions". Birzeit.

shown, along with the interpretation of their definition.

In this paragraph we offer a brief introduction of the technical planning methods, based on a historic town conservation plan⁴⁴. Qintong is a town with a built area of 60.5 ha. The whole town has maintained its morphology: the river embracing the historic town, double-line main street in the center separating the town in two parts, a town-perforative river, and eight vital traditional landscape sites. Unfortunately, now buildings erected along the main street and the river have modern architectural characteristics. The traditional townscape and features have decayed seriously. According to the chronometric analysis, the traditional feature area was built before the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, while the bad-quality traditional townscape area was built between 1950s and 1980s. The population density of the area is very high, while the whole skyline is relatively good because 90% of the buildings have less than 2 floors, but the main street buildings have more than 4 floors.

The conservation plan presents, besides the analysis of vital form elements, an examination of the city's status quo. Through the drawing of the existing historic elements, we can see that the majority of historic elements are located in the northern area of the city. The quality of the buildings along the double-line main street is relatively good, though the buildings were mainly built during the last 30 years and only mimic the traditional feature.

Based on the prior analysis of conditions, the plan offers a comprehensive evaluation of all the buildings in terms of time value, aesthetic value, culture value, etc. Then it identifies several "historic conservation areas" and "construction-controlling areas", including relic protection unit, historic elements and surrounding buildings. Buildings with a historic value will be "conserved", traditional buildings will be "improved", while the surrounding buildings made with modern materials, especially if located in the waterfront area, but having certain historical features, will be "renovated" in order to match the traditional feature. At the same time, the vital building and bulk of buildings will be registered on a list.

There are no special guidelines about the social aspects, such as lifestyles, financial resources, public participation and procedure design. As most of the buildings belong to private inhabitants (mainly farmers⁴⁵), the government heavy budget usually makes planning vainly. Mostly, physical intervention leads to mere "façade embellishment", while the inner structure is destroyed.

⁴⁴ The Qintong historic town conservation plan was compiled by the Southeast Urban Planning Institution and won the "Splendid Planning Second Class Prize" by the Jiangsu Department of Construction in 2009. Also, the Chinese Town Planning Institute awarded it the "National Splendid Planning Third class Prize" in the same year.

⁴⁵ The Chinese urban-rural dualistic structure leads to the dualistic character of cadastre. In towns, most inhabitants are farmers, not citizens. The houses belong to the farmers, while the land belongs to the collective ownership. The government has the power to intervene on private properties.

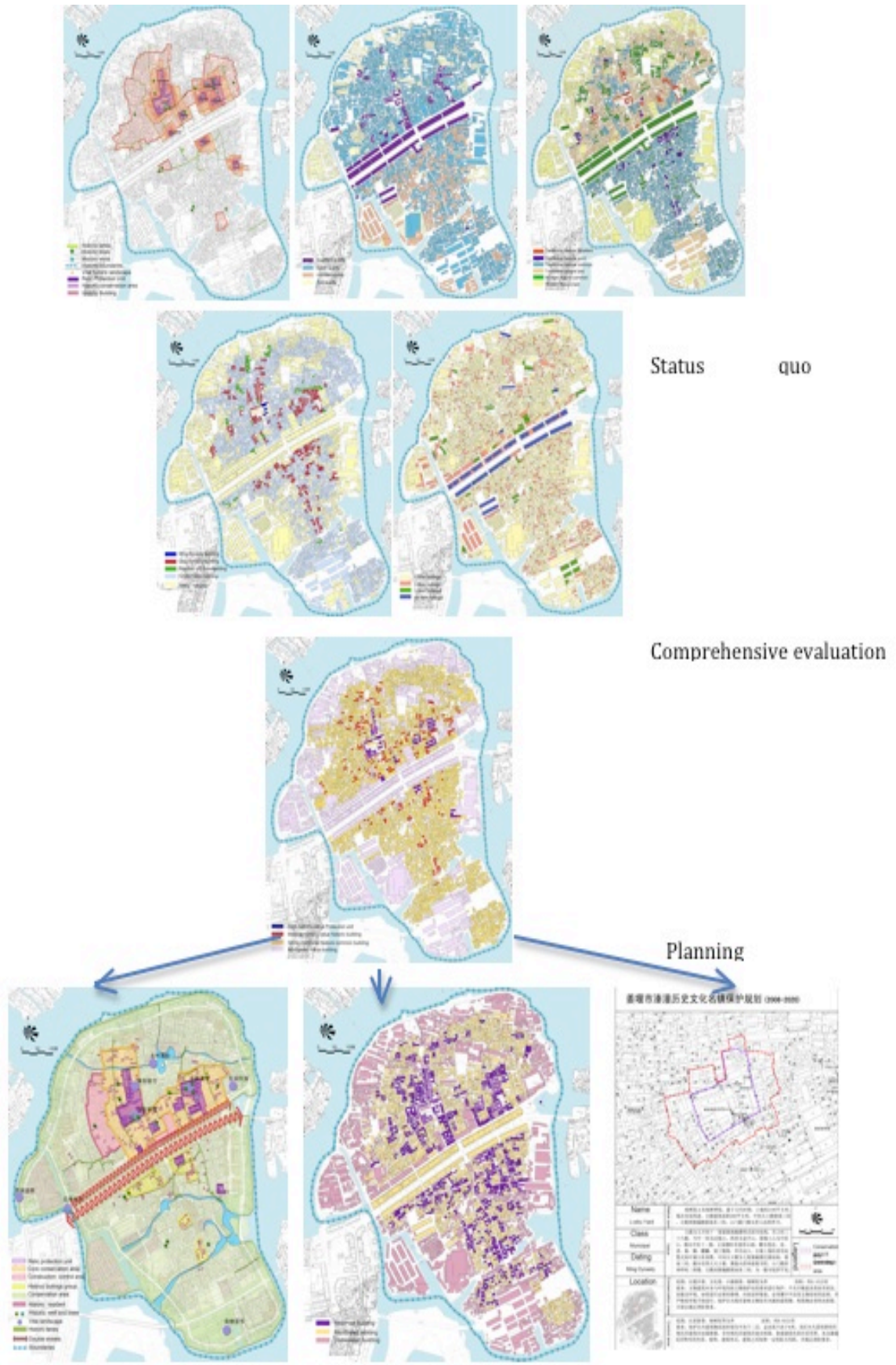


Figure 1-3: The tools in the conservation

1.3 Concepts and misinterpretations

1.3.1 Concepts and limited subjects

China has been endowed with rich and varied cultural heritage. From the point of view of conservation, definitions have an important official value. Historic elements are assigned official titles; hence they can be conserved by the government. As the number of conservation subjects is limited, buildings and sites of a certain historic value, but not listed, can be destroyed arbitrarily. Intervention methods defined in laws and bylaws are misinterpreted because of the lack of clear guidelines about their implementation.

1.3.1.1 The Historic Building

Historical relics are the single historic monuments and sites, i.e. the unmovable man-made remains, including ancient ruins, historic buildings, ancient tombs, modern typical or representative buildings, revolution commemorative buildings, etc. When the government designates historic monuments and sites, these become officially protected. The buildings that have historic, scientific or artistic value, and that display the city style and features and local characteristics are nominated “Historic Building” and, as they are approved by the government, they are included in the list of candidates for conservation.

1.3.1.2 The Traditional Feature Building

Buildings that have a certain historical value and reflect the traditional features and local identity can be named “Traditional Feature Buildings”.

1.3.1.3 The Historic Culture City⁴⁶

The “Historic Culture City” is a city that accommodates abundant cultural relics, which have an important historic value or a revolutionary memorial meaning. The city is officially titled by the State Council⁴⁷ if it has at least two “Historic Culture Districts”, each of which is larger than 1 km². Since 1982 this title has been awarded to 122 historic cities in China.

1.3.1.4 The Historic Culture District

The historic area is a zone where historic monuments building and sites are concentrated, embodying its development or the cityscape of a historical period. These monuments, sites and buildings can entirely embody the features of a certain historic period. However, the historic conservation area is the historic area which is approved by the government. This area is larger than 1 km² and historic monuments, sites and buildings cover more than the 60% of its surface. The Historic District, or Historic Site, has a fixed boundary which delimits places that are uniform from the point of view of historical events or aesthetic values, so they have coherence, relevance and continuity. The concept of “Historic Culture District” is not limited to the buildings, but includes also the environment and their connection.

1.3.1.5 The Historic Cityscape

“Cityscape (风貌, fengmao)” is a comprehensive word that refers to the overall physical and environmental features, relationships, and characteristics of a city's style and space pattern. It is a general qualitative concept without any measurable assessment.

1.3.1.6 Original appearance

⁴⁶ According to the Chinese definition, it should be called Historic and Cultural City, but officially the term Historic City is used. In the same way, the historic area is called Historic District or Zone.

⁴⁷ Ministry of Construction. *Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities (GB 50375 – 2005)*, 2005.

The term “original appearance” is mentioned in heritage conservation laws several times and has become the main aim of conservation, but it hasn't been made clear whether it refers to the “normal status”⁴⁸ or to the contemporary status.

1.3.1.7 Integration

One of the main aims of conservation is integration, though there is no specific definition of this aspect. Whether integration refers to the freezing of the contemporary status or to the normal status is not clear.

1.3.1.8. Brief conclusion

Historic conservation subjects are only limited to the official designated elements. As a result, there are a huge number of historic elements that are neglected by the official power. The side effect of this situation is quite shocking. For example, one of the criteria for a historic city to be titled Historic Culture City is to have at least two historic conservation districts. It follows that the city is not encouraged to maintain all the main parts of the historic built environment, but only a minimum part of it and to redevelop all the remaining parts. Conclusively it is worth to appeal for all relics with historic value be considered historic relics even without an official acknowledgement.

1.3.2 Intervention concepts

There are some inexact definitions of the type of interventions in the Code of Conservation Planning for Historic Cities. The six main intervention actions include conservation (保护, baohu), preservation (修缮, xiushan), refurbishment (维修, weixiu), improvement (改善, gaishan), repair (整修, zhengxiu) and rehabilitation (整治, zhengzhi). Here I have to highlight that the Chinese and English words do not match: though the law lists these six actions, actually they have a quite vague meaning in Chinese compared to their academic meaning.

1.3.2.1 Conservation (保护, baohu)

The law establishes that surveying, exploiting, evaluating, listing, repairing, betterment, improvement and other activities are included in the conservation (article 2.0.15). Therefore it does not give a clear indication of the function and order of heritage. In short conservation is the whole set of interventions.

1.3.2.2 Preservation (修缮, xiushan)

Refurbishment includes the intervention of consolidation and restoration that do not change the appearance of heritage (article 2.0.16). Actually, preservation is to conserve the status of the heritage, as it was when the awareness of the need to conserve it emerged: any addition or reduction is forbidden. The Chinese term actually means repair, renovation and betterment.

1.3.2.3 Refurbishment (维修, weixiu)

Consolidation and restoration activities which would not change the appearance of heritage (article 2.0.17) are refurbishment. Actually, refurbishment is the act or process of cleaning, decorating, and providing new equipment or facilities. The Chinese term actually means repair and maintenance.

1.3.2.4 Improvement (改善, gaishan)

⁴⁸ ‘Normal status’ refers to a ‘healthy’ status of a being, as its function goes well while its form is complete. This status, as a part of the life cycle, is very hard to define. It usually means the status when the good is created.

Improvement consists in modifying, improving and perfecting the inner layout and infrastructures without changing the outer appearance (article 2.0.18). The Chinese word means perfecting, improvement and betterment.

1.3.3.5 Repair (整修, zhengxiu)

The reconstruction of buildings and other built elements, performed without matching the original features (article 2.0.19) is called “repair”. The Chinese word means to reorganize and repair.

1.3.2.6 Rehabilitation (整治, zhengzhi)

Any intervention useful for the feature integration of Historic Culture City and Historic Culture District (article 2.0.20) is considered rehabilitation. Actually, rehabilitation is to improve a city's or district's condition so that it can be used again. The Chinese word means to reorganize and to restore.

1.3.2.7 Brief conclusion

The unclear and misinterpreted terms and concepts cause a great deal of misunderstanding. This confusion shows the primitive status of historic conservation in China. Firstly, intervention always involves a change of the structure: reorganizing the layout while keeping the “outer appearance”. Secondly, intervention has no concrete goal to aim at, while repair, renovation and reorganization always aim to change the status quo. Thirdly, there are no differences between intervention methods, so all previously discussed interventions can be applied to the same project, but no intervention method is specific to a certain situation.

1.3.3 Historic conservation dilemmas

From the study of legislation and its evolution, the basic conservation concepts have been outlined. Besides the defects of each aspect analyzed in the previous parts, I want to stress the following problems. The first difficulty is that our techniques and understanding of historic conservation are at a primitive level, so the first defect is that most concepts are about physical intervention, such as refurbishment, improvement, rehabilitation and repair. They mainly refer to change and reorganization, but they lack a complete analysis and interpretation of the various layers of values. They propose ideas that mainly deal with a single building, not with a whole cluster, aggregation or area. The second defect is represented by buffer boundaries, including the construction control area and the feature-coordinated area, which are expected to allow an integrated conservation. There are no specific regulations on interventions in these areas. Thirdly, conservation only cares about the official designated elements. Other elements with historic value, aesthetic value, artistic value or collective value which are not identified as officially acknowledged parts are destroyed on a large scale, even in Historic Culture Cities. The conservation performing always violates the basic conservation discipline, such as heritage integration, which always sacrifices authenticity. Also, the designers' lack of qualified, specific knowledge and techniques makes the situation even worse. Fourthly, inexperienced implementation without an effective supervision has no positive feedback. The approval of historic conservation plans is always granted after several historians have agreed on it, so as to ensure that the plan will serve conservation aims. But in fact the great loss of our culture identity could never be recovered and it is always happening every day.

The second difficulty is the instinctive paradoxical self-contradiction of the Historic Culture City conservation per se. Though conservation is a kind of comprehensive and integrated action, the city cannot be preserved entirely. Even if most part of its traditional original fabric has disappeared, the city still holds its title, so conservation plans are used just to generally regulate the structure and space pattern. For example, in Luoyang historic centre 90% of the inhabited houses are one to two-floor buildings, but they were built in the '60s as the result of the expansion of the population. The space pattern and space structure of the city are almost the same, but its feature is not traditional. Almost every city faces such a dilemma: a great loss of content, but a little traditional fabric and context still exist. From the point of view of official listing, the latter have no value for conservation and the single conservation bodies have limited resources without public participation.

As the government is the only responsible body, the protection of historic interests has been a concern of the government since 1900. The main economic task is to set by the official bodies, while there is little chance for other kinds of private and international resources to take part in conservation projects. Conservation is seen as conflicting with development and modernity, and causing a great financial burden to the public budget, so it is not of great concern for all levels of government⁴⁹. The government always handles this work with a negative attitude. Conservation should be implemented by a variety of players to make sure that the shared vision of conservation or preservation can be reached⁵⁰. Furthermore, the absence of implementation of the legislative framework for the protection and conservation cannot guarantee the aim of conservation.

The third problem is that the policies of the market economy system have accelerated the transformation, reinterpretation and destruction of cultural heritage. Along with the rise of tourism-oriented economy and traditional-thematic-oriented economy, conservation has been treated as a dualistic tool for economic regeneration and cultural commodification. Following European perspectives on what is valuable to preserve, which focus on high artistic value on one hand and the use of conservation as a national image for economic regeneration on the other hand, preservation efforts came to be dominated by those with institutional access to heritage resources, who focused on attracting the economic power of the rising middle class and tourism rather than the needs of local habitants.

Relics are seen as a kind of resource for development, as tourist destinations or as the essential issue for a future real estate development. Hence, the institutional body will weigh the value of relics in a kind of economic way: if the value of relics is greater than the economic interests brought out by the redevelopment, they will keep them, otherwise they won't.

The forth dilemma is the social factor deficiency: without sufficient public participation the “scraping-model conservation” and the “museum-model conservation” have caused

⁴⁹ Wang S. *From a living city to a World Heritage City: authorized heritage conservation and development and its impact on the local community*. International development planning Review, 34(1), 2012.

⁵⁰ AHC, Australian Heritage Commission, *Protection of local heritage places, a guide for communities*. Australia. 2001.

non-reversible socio-cultural impacts on the local community and the context, such as the displacement of the local population and the elimination of local activities from their traditional living context. The traditional lifestyle has been widely destroyed during conservation.

1.4 Historic conservation and local participants

1.4.1 Social issue

The matter of conservation should include the material built environment on one hand and the immaterial social aspects on the other. At the moment though, we Chinese completely neglect the latter in our practice. Space is the consolidated pattern of social factors; hence conservation should initially reinterpret and represent the intrinsic social meaning of heritage. The Chinese have an instinctive tradition according to which the political power runs through every aspect of the process of building construction and city forming. Space intervention, as a tool of governance, is controlled by governors in order to illustrate their will, social order and moral ritual⁵¹. All social aspects are controlled in the material construction procedure.

Since the conservation idea was introduced in China, conservation has had an overt authoritarian feature. As a government responsibility, it's the public player that mainly participates in historic conservation, while the private ones were expelled. The national land cadastre has made this more obvious under the communist governance. The nationalized land and unchallengeable state authority made it possible to controlled all city plans very well. Public resources and private factors in the built environment should be covered to gain its feasibility. Historic conservation, as a designed procedure, should be checked and redeveloped so that it can achieve its aims.

1.4.1.1 Public operators

In 1951 the State Council published the "Regulation on the Duty and Power Division of the Antiquity Management" and the "Contemporary Organization of the Local Antiquity Management Committee". Since then, local government has officially been involved in conservation activities. In 1956, the first national antiquity general survey was carried out in 1,126 counties and 36,231 antiquities were listed. Then the second and third general surveys listed 0.4 million antiquities and 0.77 million antiquities in 1981 and 2007

⁵¹D. Abramson argues that Chinese preservation and planning emphasize the city's integrity as a planned entity. "From the feudal dynasties, on the basis of "building the inner wall to protect the King, constructing the outer wall to defend the people" (Wuyuechunqiu), the physical space has had this social function. The city construction reflects the will of the ruling class, following three basic policies: "power centralization", "Li Zhi" and "Lifang". The city form forms like, as "Kaogongji" notes, "the craftsmen construct the capital city, it has a rectangular form which is nine square Li, each wall has three gates, and each of the longitudinal and transverse direction has nine 72-chi width road. The temple of the ancestors is on the left while the temple of the State is on the right. Then the palace is at the front, while the market is located at the back and is about 100 square Bu (about 0.33 m). The city was divided into different function areas, such as the palace, institutional offices, markets and residential (community) area. The styles and forms of the residences cannot surpass the government and palace materials, colours, height, etc., thus showing their humility, which is called Ritual System. Lifang is a rectangular residential area and as a unit to govern. Other cities will choose smaller and narrower roads to show their humility." Abramson D. B., *The aesthetics of city-scale preservation policy in Beijing*. Planning Perspective, 22. 2007 April, p. 129-166.

respectively⁵². The fact that State Culture Departments at various levels are responsible for conservation was officially established by the “Interim Regulation on Antiquities Conservation Management (文物保护单位暂行条例, wenwu baohu guanli zanxing tiaoli)” in 1961. The State Culture Departments at various levels established branches for heritage conservation, while the Ministry of Culture represented the headquarters. The Culture Department, including the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, the Provincial Heritage Bureau, and the Municipal Heritage Bureau⁵³, set up special branches for heritage management, including survey, analysis, evaluation, listing and adaptive reuse. The reused body is in charge of regular maintenance, while the Construction Departments⁵⁴ compile the planning, fixing the land use, deciding and carrying out interventions and assessing their results! The planning institution, owned by the Planning Bureau, compiles conservation plans, while the Construction Departments carry them out. We have mentioned that the Construction Departments aim to develop, so they always exploit the land in the name of conservation. Each of the departments at the same level has no power to regulate the counterpart; hence, conservation has no feedback during the implementation. This usually makes conservation planning useless.

The power of the official body penetrates into every aspect of the conservation planning, which embodies a concentrated reflection of centralization. Conservation mainly depends from the government, so most financial resources come from the government’s budget. The government’s construction branches are usually in charge of all aspects of “conservation” on a large scale. Because of the national land cadastre, most of the listed historic heritage and buildings’ property rights belong to the State. Or even when there are some historic buildings without the official designation that belong to a private people, the land on which they are located is owned by the State, so the government has the power to expropriate them.

Centralization has brought some advantages, such as the powerful implementation and quick realization of projects’ aims, but it makes the government a heavy burden. The Beijing municipal government invested ¥33 million (\$ 5.5 million) between year 2000 and 2003, and ¥12 million (\$ 2 million) per year from 2003 to 2008. Until 2011, the Lijiang Municipal government invested ¥1.6 billion (\$ 0.27 billion) on “conservation” projects. But when facing such a large amount of historic subjects, this enormous investment is an utterly inadequate measure to change the deteriorating situation. The sole public investment only covers one-off interventions, not regular ones. Ironically, most of the public financial investment in conservation comes from the destruction of other historic areas. Powerful and fast decisions sometimes cause irrecoverable damages, while a slow intervention could provide more time to make more appropriated choices.

⁵² <http://www.wenwuchina.com/news/detail/201212/28/197037.shtml>

⁵³ The state Administration of Cultural Heritage is a branch of the Ministry of Culture; the Provincial Heritage Bureau is a branch of the Department of Culture, while the Municipal Heritage Bureau is a branch of the Municipal Culture Bureau.

⁵⁴ The national construction department is the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, then in the provincial level is the Department of Housing and Urban-Rural development, and in the municipal level are two departments, the Urban and Rural Construction Commission and the Planning Bureau.

Table 1-7: various public players

	Participants	Duty		Duty
National	Ministry of Culture	Survey, evaluation, listing, adaptive reuse, maintenance	Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development	
Provincial	Provincial Heritage Department		Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development	
Municipal	Municipal Heritage Bureau		Urban and Rural Construction Commission	Carry out the plan, regenerate and redevelop
			Planning Bureau	Planning institution: compiling the plan

There is a half-official historic conservation committee in every municipality and province, like the Hubei Historic Culture City Conservation Committee, which was established in 2005. The Committee⁵⁵ is formed by some professors and participates in some parts of the assessment and plan compilation. The committee can provide some proposals and opinions about the planning, but it doesn't have the power to punish violation.

1.4.1.2 Private actor

The involvement of private resources in public works in the Chinese conservation system is at a primitive stage. This unique phenomenon is caused by the following reasons: firstly, the publicity procedure is invalid, which actually prevents the participation of private actor rather than encouraging it. Secondly, conservation planning should be compiled by qualified design institutions, hence the private has no qualification to work. Thirdly, the Construction Department controls all construction activities and this makes the complex approval procedure prevent private resource from participating. Fourthly, because the listed heritage and the land belong to the nation, the government offers little chance for private resources to take part in conservation.

According to the Constitution, all the land belongs to the Country, while inhabitants can only have ownership of houses or rent them temporarily. During the complex nationalization of property, ownership of all the courtyards changed from the landlord-comprador class, bureaucrat bourgeoisie's private ownership, to the collective ownership or public ownership. Then the Public Department distributed the right to use the land to workers. Though it only allocated the right of use rather than the ownership, this

⁵⁵ The Committee belongs to the Construction association, a kind of guild in the construction. The departments supervised it and the Committee can give some advices to the decision. They cannot be involved into the planning compiling, but it either cannot guide the planning work actually.

led to an overuse of the buildings. As they do not own them, inhabitants are not eager to maintain and preserve “their houses”, but tend to change their structure by building secondary rooms arbitrarily. They devote little resources to conservation or rehabilitation and rather leave this duty to the public body. Considering all historic built elements belonging to privates, the conservation burden is too heavy to bear for private people.

Officially, the government tries to encourage inhabitants to get involved in conservation, but with little effective methods. Nevertheless, along with the growing appreciation of the traditional built environment and potential economic value of historic buildings, private resources have become more involved in conservation. In the first place, the burgeoning tourism-oriented economy encourages privates to make use of heritage. As rare resources, private resources set up cooperative platforms with the public departments for economic reasons. Some developers and land agents have begun to invest in conservation projects. Secondly, the historic built environment is seen as a kind of lifestyle which can remind of the collective memory. So rich people are now ready to pay millions of dollars for courtyard houses. Then the courtyard would be modified into residences, hotels, restaurants or clubs. In fact, private investors only care about those buildings which are of good quality or easy to modify.

Some private people and NGOs have engaged into historic conservation, too. They appeal for “real conservation”, which cares about local inhabitants' rights and wishes to extend ethnic culture wealth. The project of the Beijing Bell and Drum Tower District, which is in the construction-control area of the Forbidden City, is a comparable successful case. The District government initially embarked on the “Beijing Time” project in the name of conservation in 2010. According to the “conservation plan”, the whole traditional original built context should be demolished and rebuilt: the site south of the Drum Tower is to be demolished in order to create a mall; the courtyards between the two towers are to be demolished for a piazza; the area north of the Bell Tower is to be demolished for the metro; and the neighbouring courtyards in an area of about 2 km² will be demolished for some shops. A few Historic Buildings are to be maintained, but with great changes. Though the whole project was declared to be a kind of conservation project, actually the design is a redevelopment project on a large scale. Some well-known private professors, journalists and citizens have urged to oppose this fake conservation publicly for a long time. As there is some destruction of historic buildings, the District government has stopped the project when faced with the great force of public opinion. Unfortunately though, until now the government has not shown the new project publicly, but has implemented it secretly. Because the government does not want to lose its interests in this project.

1.5 The analytical approach

We need to have an overall familiarity with the historic environments' morphology evolution, normal status, current status, differences and causes of the prior both. Hence based on the analysis, the later conservation of the “current status” knows what is the original and what has changed. Then it provides feasible and scientific basement for the interventions. The analysis of historic built environment evolution is the premise for a

proper and accurate work. There are two ways to abstract the information from the documents and historic built environment per se. The data abstraction based on historic maps and morphological survey, which will be elaborated in the following two sections separately.

1.5.1 Data transferring from old graphs⁵⁶: Hangzhou as an example

Historical maps and the writing documents in various periods can be abstracted, transferred and represented into the urban-space system. From the historic maps, the hills, water, space form, streets, walls, official palace, context and facilities can be traced. But the differences between the cartographic documents give room to confusion, see table 1-8. In Xijin Dynasty, Geographer Pei Xiu (224-271) proposed “Six Criteria of Cartography”, including ratio, direction, distance, terrain, angle, camber. Based on a comparative perspective, the linguistics in the old days can be applied into the modern context. The maps of Suzhou in various dynasties show the space pattern; hence we can



Figure 1-4
Left: Suzhou in Nansong;
right: Suzhou in Ming;

Left: Suzhou in Qing;
right: Suzhou in Republic of China;

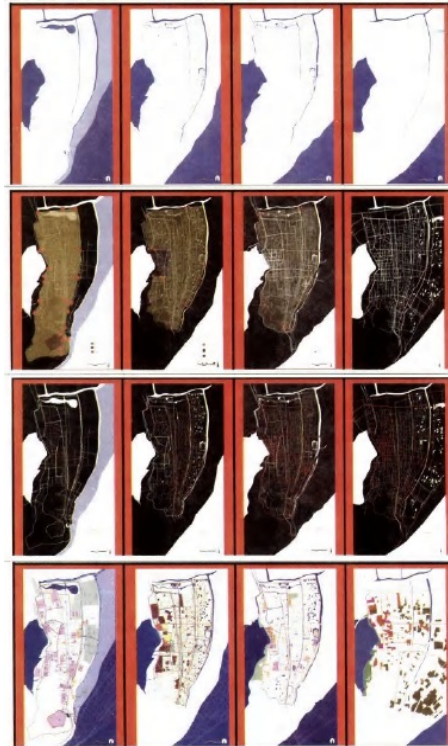


Figure1-5
Comparison of various space elements

Water system

Space factors

Streets

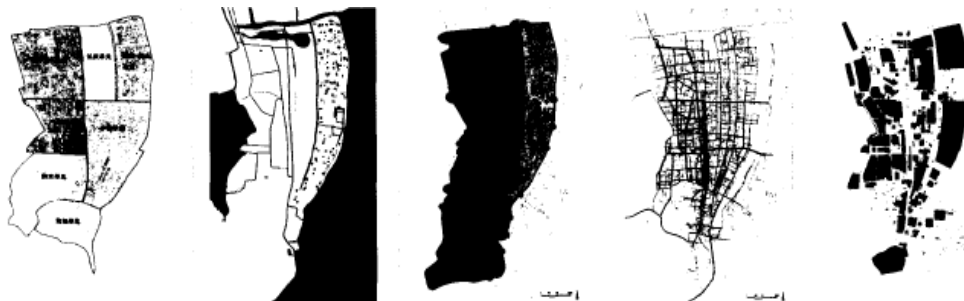


Figure 1-6: space factors overlapping,

⁵⁶ Based on: Li Jian, Dong Wei. An Integrated Research Approach on City Map Decoding Based on Reshaping Decoding of Ancient Maps of Hangzhou City. Urban Planning Forum. 2008.2

abstract the space types of the historic built environment. In Nansong map, we can see the whole city was divided by the rivers into a great many of blocks, and most of the blocks were gated by the walls forming the residential area, called “lifang”. In Ming map, the lifang walls were demolished while several vital buildings were built. Then in Qing Dynasty, blocks were divided by lanes forming smaller housing blocks. The fabric became more intense and laid the basic morphology for the modern periods. Hence space dimension of the vital private courtyards, gardens and other space elements, layout and location are very clear.

Item	Advantage	Disadvantage	Quantity Evaluation	Feature	Problems
Old map	Empiricism	Complex, lack classified	Inaccurate, Immeasurable	Low readability	Unclear
Modern map	Scientifically	Classified, integration	Accurate, measurable	High readability	Feasible

Table 1-8 comparison of old and modern mapping

Taking Hangzhou as an example, data transferring from the historic document indicates the key context feature, vital fabric elements. As the capital, cultural center and commercial center in Nan Song Dynasty (1127–1279), the walled historic center covers 11 km² initially and then it expanded a bitter to 14.4 km².

In terms of the lack of the old maps, we can carry out several steps to transfer the useful information from the urban fabric evolution. There are 5 historic maps, Nansong, Qing Dynasty (1636-1912), People of Republic (1912-1949) and the 1980s’, see figure 1-4. The transferring can be carried out in 5 steps. Firstly, the information is classified into different factors. Secondly, the classified information is overlapped, and it is a synchronic and diachronic analysis, see figure 1-5. Furthermore, the information should be located acutely as Chinese old maps are not perspective and realism of the painting. As the information is not accurate, it should be remedied. Supported by the GIS, there can be established a database.

Data information abstraction in historic document is a way to set the reference time point for the further intervention. Every historic built element can be set a precise reference time point. In this way, the representation is scientific, not imaginary.

1.5.2 Suzhou city morphological analysis⁵⁷

This paragraph provides another analytical method to identify the fabric physical features based on the statistic analysis of a number of blocks in particular morphological regions in each period. Through the identification of the synchronic types of blocks, plots and building fabric in various parts, taking the example of Suzhou historic center, the later intervention can have a more detailed guide. The space categories are defined by several criteria, including size, height, location, proportion, density, volume of physical forms and their relationship with the surrounding environment, such as orientation and connection with access routes.

⁵⁷ Based on: Chen F., Romice O. Romice O., *Preserving the cultural identity of Chinese cities in urban design through a typo-morphological approach*. Urban Design International (2009) 14, p.3–54.

Suzhou, originally named as Pingjiang, is located in the alluvial plain of Yangtze River, southeast of Jiangsu Province, east-central China, and covers a territory of 1,650 km² territory with a historic center of 16.5 km². The city was founded as the capital of the State of Wu in 514 BC, and it flourished during the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1126 AD). Its basic morphological configuration was established in Ming Dynasty. Since the late Qing Dynasty (1850s), the city has experienced modernization, see the former figure 1-4. During the People's Republic of China era (1949–present), Suzhou's morphology has changed dramatically because of national-wide industrialization and urbanization.

Using a map dated from the Emperor Qian Long's reign (1736–1795), see figure 1-7, three urban blocks are studied. The plot patterns in each block are shown in figure 1-8. The sizes, portions and areas of the blocks have been measured and analyzed to find common physical properties, see figure 1-9. As shown in the four charts, the lengths of all blocks are similar, between 50 and 100 meters, whilst the widths of the blocks vary between 50 and 250 meters, suggesting that the lengths of traditional blocks in Suzhou are less flexible than their widths. The reason for this is related to the courtyard building type.

Furthermore, the areas of commercial blocks are smaller than that of residential one, because commercial blocks need more perimeter edges to directly face streets. Another feature is that all blocks were arranged in a regular chessboard pattern, while their major width/length ratios range from 1 to 2, with few of them exceeding 4. The plots' patterns differ from the other. Some plots often occupied a narrow and long slot from the north edge to the south edge; some plots are smaller and much denser. At the building level, the historical buildings built in the first period are marked in black, whereas buildings built in the following periods are marked in blue and light grey. A house group included several courtyards, along each of which were 3–5 roofed buildings with 2–4 yards. These were between 70 and 100 meters in length, and around 20 meters in width, see figure 1-10. These houses were north-south-oriented, and arranged in rows adjacent to each other in an east-west direction, see figure 1-11, showing ritual orders. Their accessibility analysis illustrates the relationship between buildings and surrounding areas. The figure 1-12 illustrated that almost all the traditional houses had direct access to the south and north streets.

Compared to the prior time reference setting analysis, this morphological study is more about the dimensional issue. The precise dimensional information provides a precise foundation for the further physical intervention pointedly. The status quo is the subjects, not the previous existing. It admits the change, based of which to carry out the conservation work.

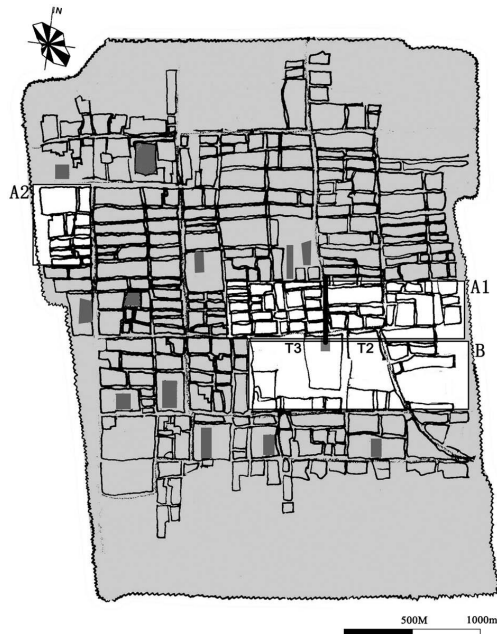


Figure 1-7: urban blocks of Suzhou in the eighteenth century and the selected study areas, source Chen



Figure 1-8: various blocks (adapted from the Ping Jiang Map (1229) (Wu, 2003, p. 94)).

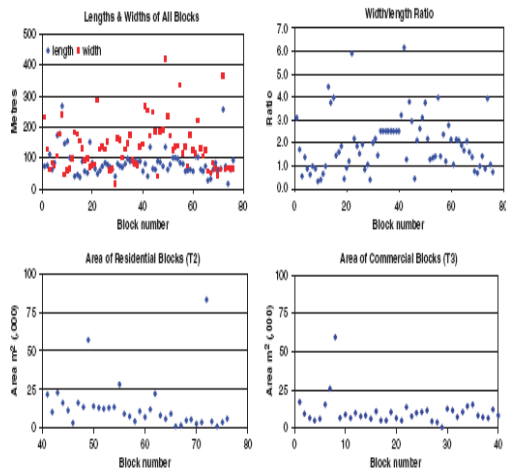


Figure 1-9: analysis of the sizes, portions and areas of the blocks, source Chen

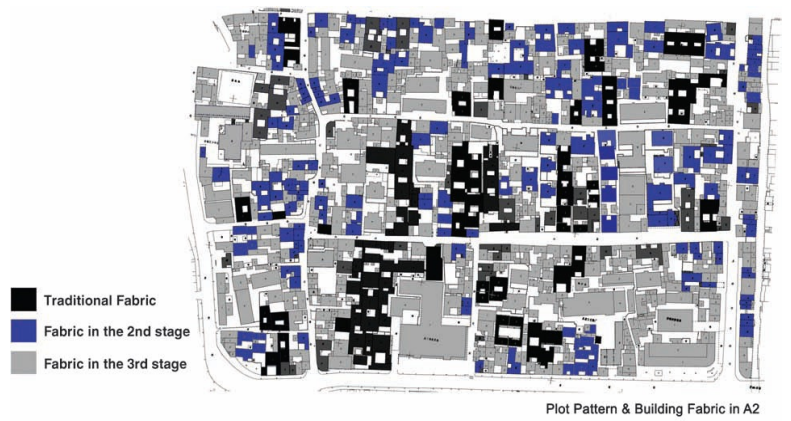


Figure 1-10: building fabric and plot analysis, source Chen

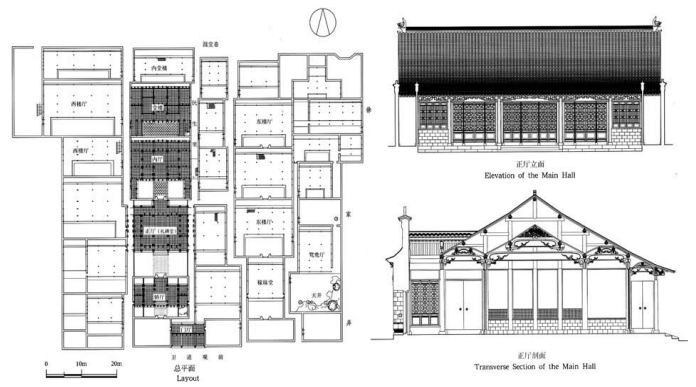


Figure 1-11: building groups and image



Figure 1-12: the analysis of the accessibility and routes, source Chen

1.6 Relevant studies in recent Chinese historic city conservation

1.6.1 The making of a theory

Chinese historic conservation developed a “saltatory evolution” from micro-level directly to macro-level, as it started from single heritage protection, then it suddenly aimed to erect a city-scale conservation planning mechanism in 1982. Only later did it develop as medium-level historic district conservation. It is a process in which the “city-wide” “picturesqueness unity⁵⁸” conservation has changed into “frame-structure maintenance” in practice.

During exploration, a great deal of studies relevant to historic conservation issues during emerged. Liang Sicheng (1901-1972) as a typical represented professional and scholar who accommodates the Western techniques with a Chinese ethic view, erected ethic style through a scientific reorganization and representation of Chinese historic buildings and construction tradition between 1930s and 1950s⁵⁹. He was enthusiastic about the preservation of the existing historic cities and he started a transition from the idea that “construction is to demolish the dilapidated rooms to rebuild a new one in old days” to the concept of construction aimed to “restore or preserve the status quo”⁶⁰. In his proposal for Beijing, Liang and his fellows intended to build a new town to keep the existing one, as an original “**planned the whole**” form and “a work of art” context.

The “picturesqueness unity” leads to two key inclination: completion and city-wide conservation way. This “holistic conservation” had set the basic embryonic outline of the modern “Historic Cultural City” conservation planning, but there were no concrete interventions to the existing context.

Around 1950s, another architect, Hua Lanhong advocated “the intertwinement expansion accommodating the old to the Baroque radial street by restructuring the street grid”, as Haussmannian did in Paris. He proposed some interventions to the existing context in order to receive the new functions. Facing to the destruction of the modern architecture, Dong Jianhong firstly alerts that the existing historic conservation planning is too rude to prevent the damage. So, he introduced an advanced historic city conservation approach, based on conservation principles, content, feature analysis, types of historic cities, some basic protection ways, and some early Historic Culture conservation examples. The main two “intervention” ways includes to maintain, to modify and to rebuild in the different sites⁶¹. In 1993 he proposes to establish a “**Frame Protection**” way to conserve the basic historic structure. Hence the “city-wide” discipline is represented in the “frame maintenance way”. The famous planner Wu Liangyong’ tentatively proposed an “**Organic**

⁵⁸ Integration has a different meaning in the Chinese context compared with that of international charters: it is a kind of picturesqueness unity and completion. Integration means “form completion”, not the “existing heritage and environment connection”.

⁵⁹ Liang Sicheng. *Complete Works of Liang Sicheng*. Beijing, China Architecture and Building Press, 2001.

⁶⁰ Liang Sicheng, *Confucian Temple architecture and its repair plan*, see in *Complete Works of Liang Sicheng*. Beijing, China Architecture and Building Press, 1984, p.68-69.

⁶¹ Dong Jianhong, Ruan Yisan. *Historic city appreciation and protection*. Shanghai, Tongji University Press, 1993.

Renewal⁶² in 1994, under the organization and relocation by the local government, more attached to the physical layer and less to the social, economic and cultural facets. Intervention was a way to maintain fabric by rebuilding a new form in historic area, as he proposes “a metabolic process of part and tissue of the organism city”. The “Organic Renewal” as a redevelopment way in a nostalgic style, is not adopted widely as it cannot bring great profits. Though Wu has claimed that it is a renewal method not a conservation way, officers unintentionally or intentionally mix redevelopment with conservation.

Professor Ruan Yisan, as the founder of “National Research Center of Historic Cities” is the recent most important conservation practitioner and preacher. In 1986, he proposed a “conserving the old town, developing new town”, and “repair the old like the old, to restore its authenticity⁶³” in order to indicate the differences. Accompanied with his colleagues, such as Wang Jinghui and others, he gives a full interpretation of Historic City conservation theory and planning⁶⁴ in 1999. On the basis of the work of Dong Hongjian, this interpretation proposes a clearer view on content, feature analysis and protection ways, and introduces 11 historic cities conservation examples. According to Professor Ruan, heritage protection includes “freezing maintenance” and “rebuilding”, like façade maintenance, structure maintenance and partial maintenance. In terms of historic district, there are “museum-way protection” and “collage protection”, height control, infrastructure improvement, inhabitant relocation and function modification. The whole special strategy to the built environment is just about “structure modification, maintenance”.

Professor Zhang Song, proposes an application of “**Integrated Conservation**” method in 2001⁶⁵. Facing the disruptive conservation, he firstly introduces the role of the physical elements, such as the water, form, historic area, skyline in the maintaining of the feature. The integrated conservation mode is a way to “conserve the whole” historic environment, not only the listed but also the other built elements⁶⁶, but it remains just a concept without a systematic theory of intervention. He also introduces some foreign experiences and basic conservation principles, such as the authenticity and integration.

With regard to conservation methods, such as Viollet le Duc “feature restoration”⁶⁷, Ruskin’s “historic restoration⁶⁸”, Boito and Giovannone’s “scientific restoration”, “documents-based restoration”, and other “critical restoration” (see the Chapter 2), Chinese professionals have introduced the basic concepts of conservation discipline on one side, and have worked them in the practice on the other side. As the preferences of the completion status and “normal status”, feature restoration is prevalent. Conclusively, a short overlook about the scientific literature concerning the Chinese conservation policy

⁶² Wu Liangyong. *Beijing old city and Ju'er hutong*. Beijing, China Architecture and Building Press, 1994.

⁶³ Ruan Yisan. *The key points to preserve the world heritage*. Journal of Tongji University, social science version, 2002(6):1.

⁶⁴ Wang Jinghui, Ruan Yisan, Wang Lin. *Historic Culture City conservation theory and planning*. Shanghai, Tongji University Press, 1999.

⁶⁵ Zhang Song. *An introduction to Integrated Conservation- a way for the protection of culture heritage and historic environment*. Shanghai, Shanghai Technology Press, 2001.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Viollet le Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonne de l'architecture*. Paris: A. Morel, 1875.

⁶⁸ Ruskin J., *The seven lamps of Architecture*. New York: Dover Publications. p.19.

and discipline can be summed up with reference to these following five domains⁶⁹: theory, practice, public intervention, urban society, research tools.

1 From the point of view of historic conservation theory

The theoretical study of conservation theory deals with the introduction of international charters, concepts and theory creation. Ruan Yisan, Zhang Jie and Zhang Chengyu stress the importance of the “authenticity” through interpretation of its exact meaning and context issues⁷⁰, identifying the “authenticity” idea coming from “origin” but including the procedure results⁷¹. Historicity and values is the root of the conservation⁷², while the time-value is the most important element. Yuan Zhong views the “imagery surviving” of the historic buildings and environments, is the conservation subjects⁷³. Professor Zhang Lianggao calls for “whole district conservation” and academic conscience of conservation. Wang Jun give the initial methodology establishment on the historic district conservation⁷⁴. Zhu Ying introduces typology application in district conservation, according to integrated conservation, segments renewal and partial modification⁷⁵.

2 From the point of view of historic conservation practice

Most of the papers is about practice, such as the one of Chang Qing showing his intervention in the Shanghai Concession about consolidation, document based restoration and function-oriented rebuilding⁷⁶. Lu Junhua shows new “courtyards renovation” in the Nanchizi dilapidated houses renovation⁷⁷. Through project introductions, like Duan Xiannian gives explanation of their principles in Xi’an “Qujiang renewal model”. Though many cases violate the basic conservation law, these planners still claim they carry out the basic disciplines, see the examples in the Yuan Xi’s thesis of the historic district conservation⁷⁸, Jen Huaishang’s thesis of historic buildings conservation⁷⁹ and etc.

3 From the point of view of governance

The destruction caused by the public interventions⁸⁰ has triggered reflection on aberrant

⁶⁹ According to the “National Knowledge Infrastructure” search engine, there are about 90000 various journal papers from 1999 to today, academic papers and newspaper papers. But some not are not relevant, and the other are mainly about the cases introductions. The most relevant are some academic dissertations. http://epub.cnki.net/kns/brief/default_result.aspx.

⁷⁰ Ruan Yisan, Linlin. *The heritage conservation discipline authenticity*. Journal of Tongji University Social Science Section, 2003.02. Zhang Chengyu. *Authenticity and integration*. The Tourism Newspaper. 2004. 07.23. Zhang Chengyu. *The improvement of the authenticity and integration in the world heritage conservation practice*. Chinese Heritage Newspaper. 2005.02.18. Zhang Jie. *The mistakes and truth of the authenticity in the Old City conservation*. City Planning Review. 2007.11. Ruan Yisan, Li Hongyan. *The Chinese heritage conservation in the authenticity perspective*. Hua Zhong Architecture. 2008. 04. Zhang Chengyu. *The international and home comprehensive study of the authenticity and integration in the conservation*. Southeast Culture. 2010.04. Zhang Chengyu. *The authenticity and integration identification*. Architecture Journal, 2012 s1.

⁷¹ Li Hongyan, guided by Ruan Yisan, *The study of the authenticity theory application and practice in Chinese urban heritage conservation*, Ph.D thesis. Tongji University, 2009.

⁷² Riegl A., *The modern cult of monuments: its character and its origin*. MIT Press, 1982.

⁷³ Yuan Zhong. *Chinese historic buildings imagery surviving*. Wuhan, Hubei Education Press. 2005, p.36.

⁷⁴ Wang Jun. *The preservation of historic district*. Ph.D thesis. Tongji University, 1998.

⁷⁵ Zhu Ying. *Typology method in historic Block protection*. Urban Planning Forum, 2002, 6.

⁷⁶ Chang Qing. *The way to historic environment rebirth through design*. China Architecture and Building Press.

⁷⁷ Lv Junhua, Shao Lei. *Nanchizi dilapidated houses renewal project*. Beijing, Tsinghua University Press. 2003.

⁷⁸ Yuan Xin. *Research into conservation areas in Beijing, theory and methodologies*. Ph.D thesis. Tsinghua University, 1999.

⁷⁹ Jen Huaishang. *Research on the conservation and development of the “Hutong-Siheyan system” of the Old City of Beijing*. Ph.D thesis. Tsinghua University, 2008.

⁸⁰ Zhang Jingxin. *The four relationships issue in the historic city conservation*. The humanity Beijing and World urban construction 2010 meeting. 2010, p.234.

public management⁸¹. Shan Jixiang, as the prior director of the State Administration of Heritage, calls on to keep the urban “root” and “spirit”⁸², using “Organic regeneration” as intervention method, keeping the old road structure and trying “not to change the status quo ante”⁸³. He indicates that the conservation management is divided into various departments causing little effect⁸⁴. Li Hongli introduces Gerry Stoker’s “governance” theory about the historic environment management⁸⁵, saying that the historic environment, as a kind of public goods, should be involved into multi-factors governance model. Ruan Yisan appeals for the acknowledgment of the priority of conservation in governance⁸⁶. From the point of “city management”, Zhang Jiantao, Li Linglan, Gao Chang, and Chen Ke advice to establish management model to deal with the conservation factors, giving a procedure design independently⁸⁷. The management model tries to establish government department and legislation to guarantee the public property of the conservation.

4 From the point of view of urban society

Liu Xujie criticizes the phenomena of failure of laws and indifferent enforcement in the conservation⁸⁸. Considered as one of the key elements of the urban varieties, the need of historic environment conservation’s should be encouraged. Zhou Jian⁸⁹, Jiao Yilei, propose to use the civic community development integrated with their space conservation⁹⁰. Zhang Song, Bian Chunlan, Dongwei cares about the citizens, as the ‘culture gene’ should be preserve⁹¹.

5 From the point of view of research tools

Bian Lanchun wants to use “integrated urban design” approach to control the space pattern evolution, giving a guarantee for the historic built areas⁹². Liu Liyong, makes good

⁸¹ Zhang Song. *The features of the conservation mechanism and the contemporary challenges*. Urban Studies, Vol. 19, No. 9, 2012.

⁸² Shan Jixiang. *Maintaining urban cultural “root” and “spirit”: Chinese culture heritage conservation practice and exploration*. Beijing, Science Press, 2010.6.

⁸³ Not change the status quo ante (原状, yuanzhuang), in “Heritage and runs preserving principles” 2002, has two aspects: preserving status quo, intervening as least as possible, mainly based on daily maintenance; restoring the heritage to the original state. It indicates the understanding of “authenticity” has two complete different implications in Chinese conservation.

⁸⁴ Shan Jixiang. *Maintaining urban cultural “root” and “spirit”: Chinese culture heritage conservation practice and exploration*. Beijing, Science Press, 2010.6. p.35.

⁸⁵ Li Hongli. *The governance of Historic environment, theoretical innovation and empirical model*. China Architecture and Building Press, 2011.

⁸⁶ Ruan Yisan, Chen Ting. *The priority erection of the historic conservation*. City Planning Review. 2002.07.

⁸⁷ Zhang Jiantao. *The management of the renovation and conservation in China, taking shanghai as an example*. Urban Planning Overseas. 2004.01. Li Linglan. *The research of the conservation mechanism in perspective of “city management”*. Chang’an University, master thesis, 2004. Gao Chang. *The conservation system comparison of international and home historic districts conservation*. Tianjin University, master thesis, 2012. Chen Ke. *The conservation strategy and implementation methods of conservation in the perspective of “city management”*. Chongqing University, master thesis, 2007. Wu Chaoyu. *The exploration of the conservation management in the market-oriented economy transition*. Chongqing University, master thesis, 2008.

⁸⁸ Liu Xujie. *Achievement, duty and expectation, a brief note about the protection of historic relics in China*. In Yang Hongxun, liu Shu, *Collection of international symposium on conservation of historical cities and buildings*. Changsha, Hunan University Press. 2006, p.92.

⁸⁹ Zhou Jian. *Study on urban diversity planning*, Ph.D thesis. Tongji University, 2003.

⁹⁰ Jiao Yixue. *Community development: a feasible approach to historic areas’ conservation and redevelopment in Beijing Old City*. Ph.D thesis. Tsing Hua University, 2003.

⁹¹ Zhang Song. *Historic districts, from protecting citizens to being protected, dying out of the culture genes*. City Planning Review. 2013. Vol. 13, no. 3.

⁹² Bian Lanchun. *An integrated urban design approach to protection the Old City of Beijing*. Ph.D thesis. Tsinghua University, 2010.

use of GIS-based tool application in the historic elements analysis⁹³, Hutong-courtyard housing space pattern analysis⁹⁴. Jiang Min and Lu Jiansong give an introduction of the application of “spindle-eyesight control” in the historic district conservation.

1.6.2 Various levels of conservation plans

In the growth-oriented planning system, the various levels of conservation planning – Historic City-wide, Town-wide and Village-wide conservation planning, Historic District planning and Historic Heritage conservation planning, show gains and loose in the interpretation and misinterpretation of the theories. This paragraph presents a broad study referring to different plans in various places of China. Through the study of some conservation plans, the conservation’s defects become evident.

1.6.2.1 “City/town/village” Conservation Plans

1 Qingdao “Historic Culture City” Conservation planning



Figure 1-13: Qingdao Historic City morphology change

Designated the “Historic Culture City” title in 1994, Qingdao Municipality compiled two versions of conservation planning in 1995 (1995-2010) and 2002 (2002-2010). The conservation boundary covers the whole 28 km² of old city center. The conservation plan has comparative weak control over the space transformation.

Following the economic development, the demolition of the historic buildings (listed and un-listed), high dense population and increasing heavy traffic caused great damage. In 2012, as the situation has become pretty serious, the Municipality asked the planning

⁹³ Liu Liyong, Jiao Sheng, Zhou Jianfei. *GIS-based historic city planning and conservation*. In Yang Hongxun, liu Shu, *Collection of international symposium on conservation of historical cities and buildings*. Changsha, Hunan University Press. 2006, p.54-56.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

bureau to compile a new conservation planning (2012-2020). The plan regards three levels: structure and feature conservation, height control, and reuse. At the first level, it refers to maintaining the whole space structure, and to existing road network, see figure 1-14-1; 12 historic areas conservation, see figure 1-14-2, 100 historic streets conservation, see figure 1-14-3; skyline conservation, stressing view area conservation, architecture color conservation, conservation of sight line and scenic focal sight conservation, see figure 1-14-5; listed building group, courtyard building, and historic elements conservation. At second level refers to height control area division, see figure 1-14-7, 8 to guarantee the feature. At the third level, function modification encourages to apply feasible adaptive reuse of historic buildings in the historic areas. Some buildings are used for residence, and some are used for commercial activities and culture functions.

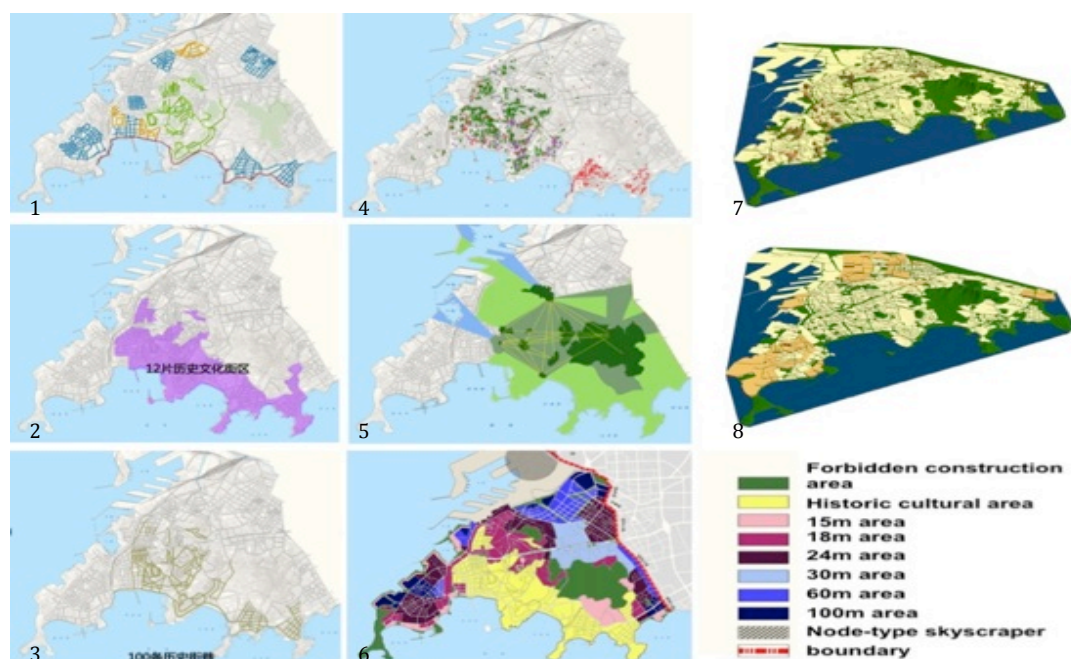


Figure 1-14: the conservation planning of Qingdao

The planning makes clear the conservation subjects but without answer to how to conserve. It falls again into the dilemma of **“to conserve the whole, while loose them all in practice”**. The city-wide conservation planning of Qingdao is still a general policy planning at the high level. In the first place, the west part and the north part of the historic center is completely replaced by the modern buildings. The historic districts and streets are mainly locate in the southern part, but most of the fabric has been substituted by the modern buildings, see figure 1-14. Secondly, the height control is like a Utopia as it cannot lower the new emerging skyscrapers on one hand, see figure 1-15-6, and it allows to build some node-type skyscrapers on the other. Even the new projects, which follow the height control, the new buildings do not match the existing cityscape. Thirdly, the adaptive reuse has caused several problems. The historic buildings are used as hotels, commercials, and offices without enough parking, facilities, and communication planning, so the heavy traffic brings out a negative influence for the characteristics. Some of good quality historic buildings along the Renmin Road have been embellished in “modern” feature for shops, while most of the resident courtyards are overused. And the intervention is quite aberrant, like the Picai Yard 1902, a western type historic courtyard today modified as a Chinese

type yards for local restaurant. The plan carries out building typology analysis and intervention proposals, see figure 1-15. The intervention aims to use a new material to replace the original creating some commercial areas in the ground floor. There are not enough public budgets to relocate the local inhabitants.

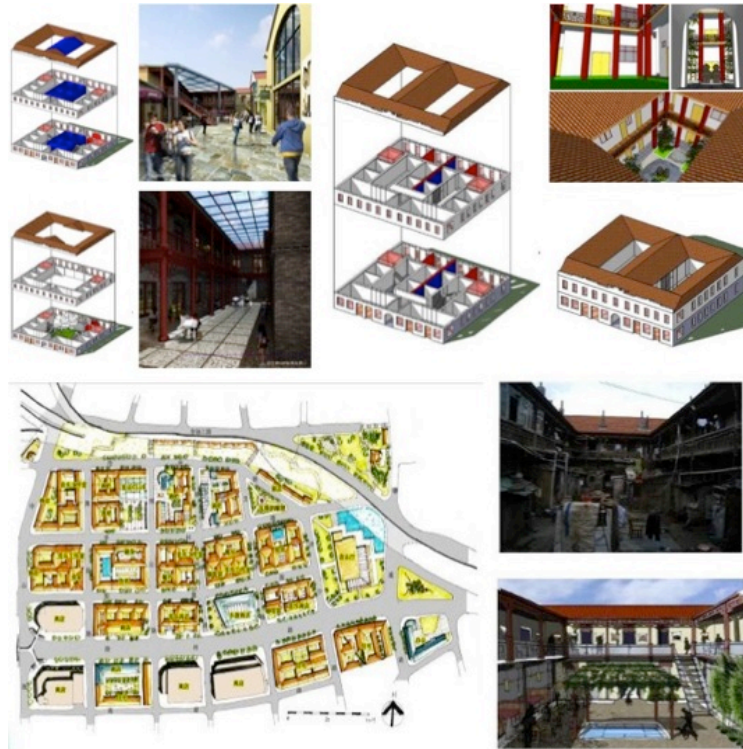


Figure 1-15: the intervention of the “courtyard” historic building

In terms of implementation, there are no concrete guidelines in the plan, but according to the result, the plan as an ideal document. Some vital historic buildings have been turned into shops and restaurants with great damage, while the 12 historic districts and 100 streets have almost disappeared, with some existing fragments. The existing courtyards are experiencing overuse with no investment.

2 Wuyishan Wufu “Historic Culture Town” conservation plan

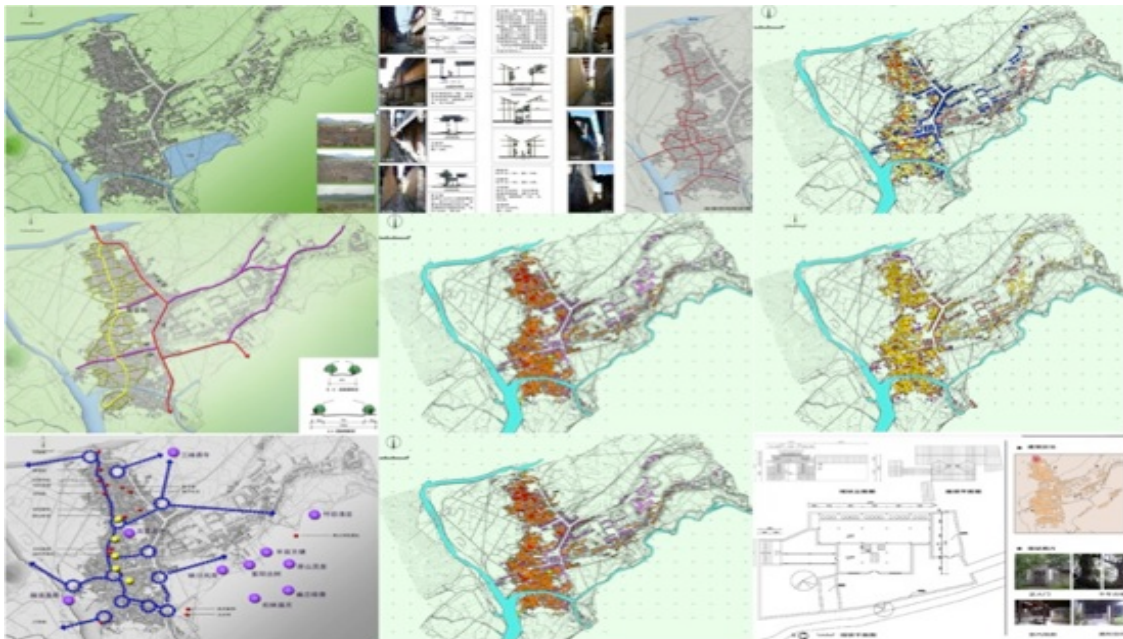


Figure 1-16: the status quo analysis of Wufu Town

Entrusted by the Wuyishan municipality and Wufu town government, the Wuhan University Planning institution is responsible for compiling the “Historic Culture Town Conservation Planning (2012-2020)”. The conservation plan is completely about the physical intervention. The status quo analysis includes the context, land use, roads, historic landscape elements, historic buildings, street scenic feature, building time property, building height, building feature, building quality, building categories and buildings listing, see figure 1-16. The analysis uses qualified words rather scientific description, such as first class, second class, good, common and bad status. The historic value analysis is missing while there is no any description about the inhabitants living.

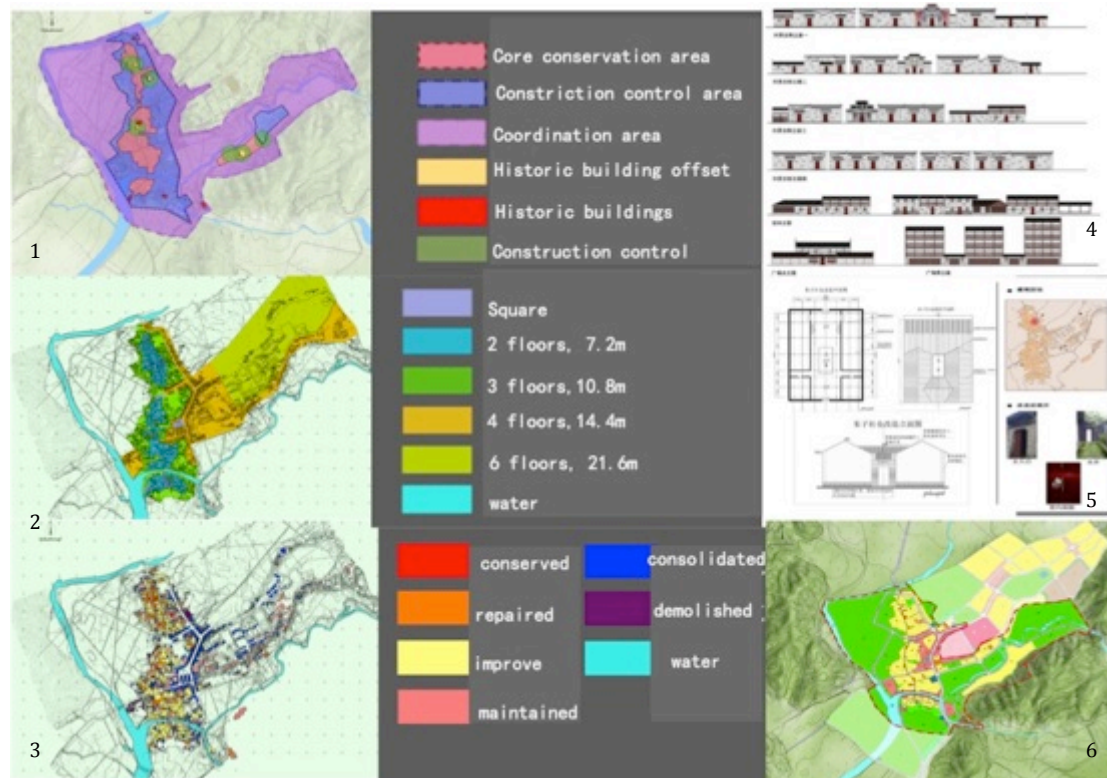


Figure 1-17: the conservation planning of the historic town.

In the planning part, the whole town area is divided into “core conservation area, construction control area, and feature coordination area”, see figure 1-17-1. According to the division of the various areas, the plan establishes the height control regulation, see figure 1-17-2. Then there are five intervention types, including conservation, repair, improving, maintenance, consolidation, and demolition, see figure 1-17-3. But these interventions, are very ambiguous, because is unclear what is the difference between repair and consolidation. In light of the single buildings, they carry out embellishment and rebuild to complete the form see figure 1-17-4, 5. It proposes to change the existing fabric for alien squares, open space and parking.

The town-wide plan pays little attention to the social, economic and other aspects, such as how to improve the life quality of residents and who will pay for interventions. It aims to develop the tourism but lack the infrastructure as well as immaterial aspects allocation.

3 Wuxi Lishe “Historic Culture Village” conservation Plan

Though they are considered a type of “historic center”⁹⁵, the remote historic villages have collapsed for loosing of young villagers, deteriorate building, shortage of facilities, lost of identity and social balance. Complied by the Wuxi Municipality Planning Institution, the conservation planning (2011-2020) covering the whole 11.18 ha, aims to embellish the environment and to trigger the urban vibrancy. It fixes various conservation boundary, sets different categories of buildings, and fits various reuse functions. There are several boundaries, see figure1-18-2, including the historic building, the conservation boundary and the construction control area. Then it identifies the key historic elements, see figure 1-18-3. After setting land use, the plan proposes new buildings directly, see figure 1-18-5.

There are no concrete regulations in all the areas. The conservation proposal is to build new buildings in north-west and south-east. Then, actually it is a development plan. The village-wide conservation plan only set the historic elements but any true conservation work.

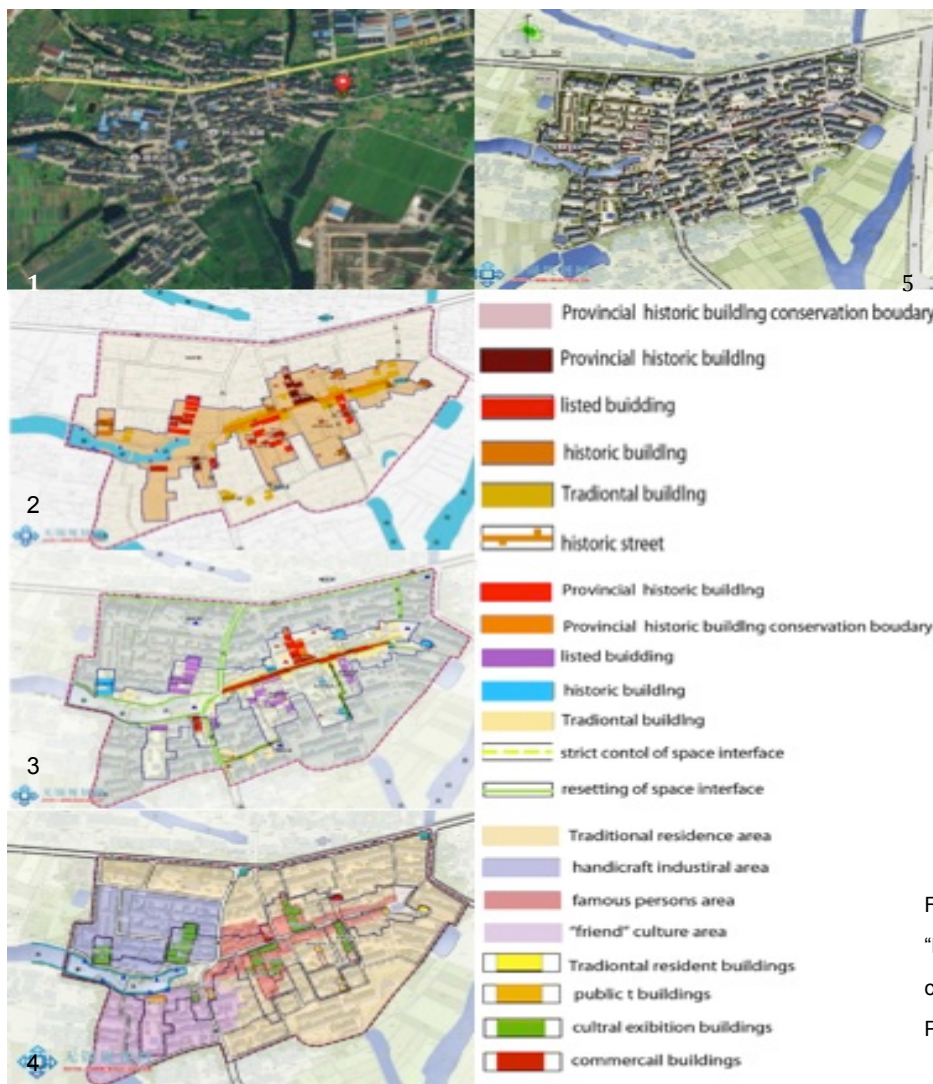


Figure 1-18 Lishe “Historic Village” conservation Plan

⁹⁵ In Chinese political governance, village belongs to the rural system, so the city planning never refers to the village until to 2003. Hence the planning law change from “urban planning law” to “urban and rural planning law” in 2007.

1.6.2.2 Historic District Conservation Plan

1. Yangzhou Jiaochangjie Historic Zone Conservation Plan

Jiaochangjie Historic Area is located in the center of the historic Culture city Yangzhou, and is extended 8.17 ha. As a former drill ground, it became a prosperous commercial area since five centuries ago. It was full of restaurants, bathhouses, inns and other facilities, reflecting the local folk custom features, see figure 1-19-2. It has declined, losing almost all the features, leaving the existing context, see figure 1-19-3,4. There are a few historic buildings, see figure 1-19-2. And most other buildings are 1-2 floors resident houses, built after 1950s. The historic context is mixed with lots of un-historic housing in a vital historic center area. The density of the buildings and residents are very high; and the space quality is very low; the living space area per inhabitants is about 4 m²; facilities are scarce. There are few low-level shops that give an image that the whole area is waning.



Figure 1-19:
Jiaochangjie
Historic Zone
conservation
Plan

Faced with critical situation, Yangzhou Municipality entrusted the Planning Institution with the compilation of a conservation plan (2001). The plan aims to exploit the land economic potentiality rather than conserving it, preferring regeneration to maintaining. In light of buildings, only dozens of historic buildings were acknowledged as such. Part of the historic buildings kept the façade but modified the interior structure, part maintained partial facade but modified the interior, the others were just to keep the material which was reused into the new 'old' buildings, see figure 1-19-2. The other new buildings were designed in innovated-ethnic types, applying wood, bricks, Chinese-style tiles, sloping roofs but not following the traditional cadaster and layout. From the "street, lane" point of view, the main method is subtraction, reducing the density of the buildings, maintaining the main streets and expanding some of them, creating some new open space in the crossing points, see figure 1-19-3,4,5. The streets serve for the car-oriented communication and commercial activities.

The Jiaochangjie Historic Area conservation planning is a typical Chinese "historic planning". In the name of integrated all-engaged discipline and balance between the development and conservation, it is truly a new development,(see figure 1-19-6, 7). In fact, the plan aims to build a new historic thematic commercial area. Firstly, depending on a few of listed historic buildings, it aims to re-organize the whole area. It is based on the existing fabric but without a historic context-oriented approach, as there is a lack of analysis of the morphology. Secondly, it is directed to simply demolish the existing background. Finally, it meets the aims to represent the traditional, but fake, feature.

2 Nanjing Laochengnan Historic area conservation Plan

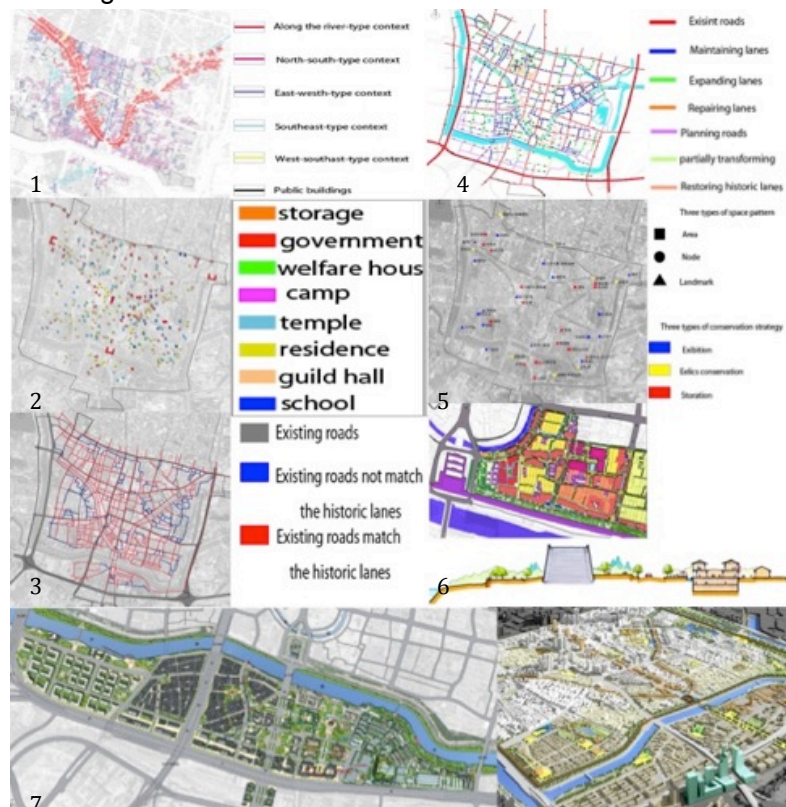


Figure 1-20: the Laochengnan conservation Plan

Locates south of the Nanjing historic city, “Laochengnan Historic Area Protection and Rehabilitation Planning” was compiled in 2009 by a coalition of the Architecture School of Nanjing University, Tsinghua University and Nanjing Municipal Planning Institution. The plan contained a detailed analysis of various space types, including different types of fabric (along the river type, north-south type, east-west type, east-south, west-south type), see figure 1-20-1, listed historic building and functions see figure 19-2, roads and streets evolution, see figure 1-20-3.

There were some innovations in this plan. Firstly, an analysis of the morphology and of building types, see figure 1-20-1, 1-21. The courtyard building is the main subject, as a cell of space⁹⁶. It can provide guide for the further innovation, by which to represent the traditional feature. But the analysis is too primitive just giving organization ways without a dimensional and stylistic interpretation. Secondly, through the study of the street evolution, the major factors that influenced the fabric are mastered. The third innovation is that urban design methodology was applied to rehabilitate the old area. After establishing the land use, see figure 1-20-6, the plan sets traditional feature space image by constructing traditional types and erected a “gate image” by modern skyscrapers, see figure 1-20-6,7. Then the planning reorganized the communication system, see figure 1-20-4. But unfortunately the new roads had no relationship with the study of prior road evolution. It tried to relocate high-strength development pressure into the neighboring areas while it re-entrusted tertiary functions to both vital historic buildings and resident buildings.

There are only three interventions, such as representation, restoration, and partial maintenance, see figure 1-20-5. Only a few historic buildings were intervened, most of the other elements didn't undergo any concrete intervention. Though it wanted to exploit some tertiary functions, and try to attract private investment in the rehabilitation, the matter of how to compensate the local residents and how to relocate the population were still open.

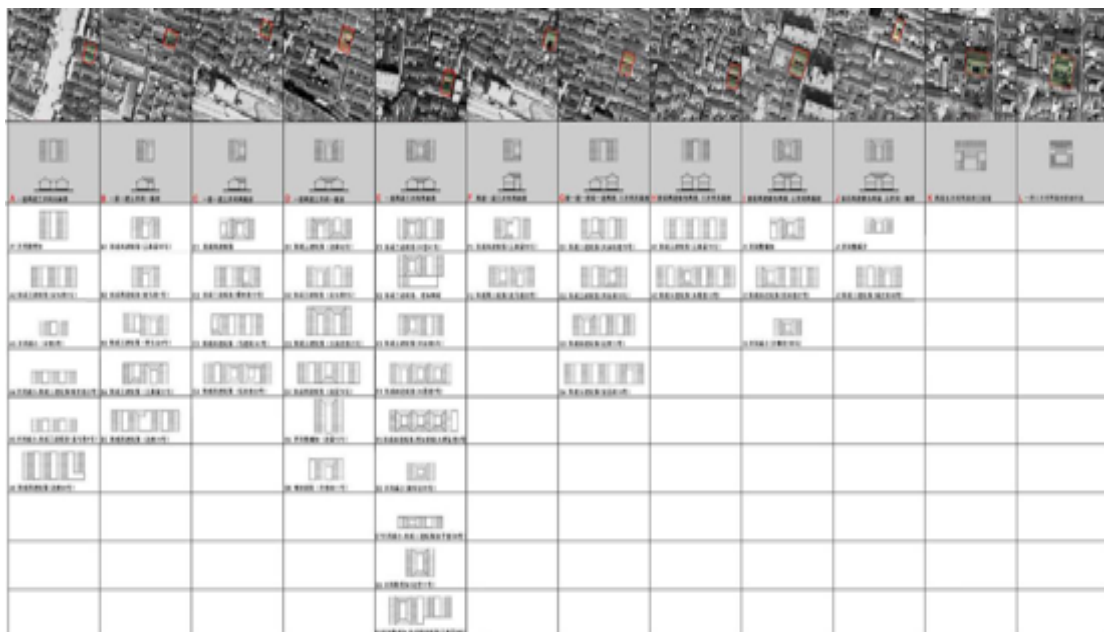


Figure 1-21: the building typologies

⁹⁶ Zhao Liying, Ning Qifeng. *Chinese traditional courtyard of the buildings study*. Architect, 1997 (4):61-68.

3 Suzhou Pingjiang Historic District conservation Plan

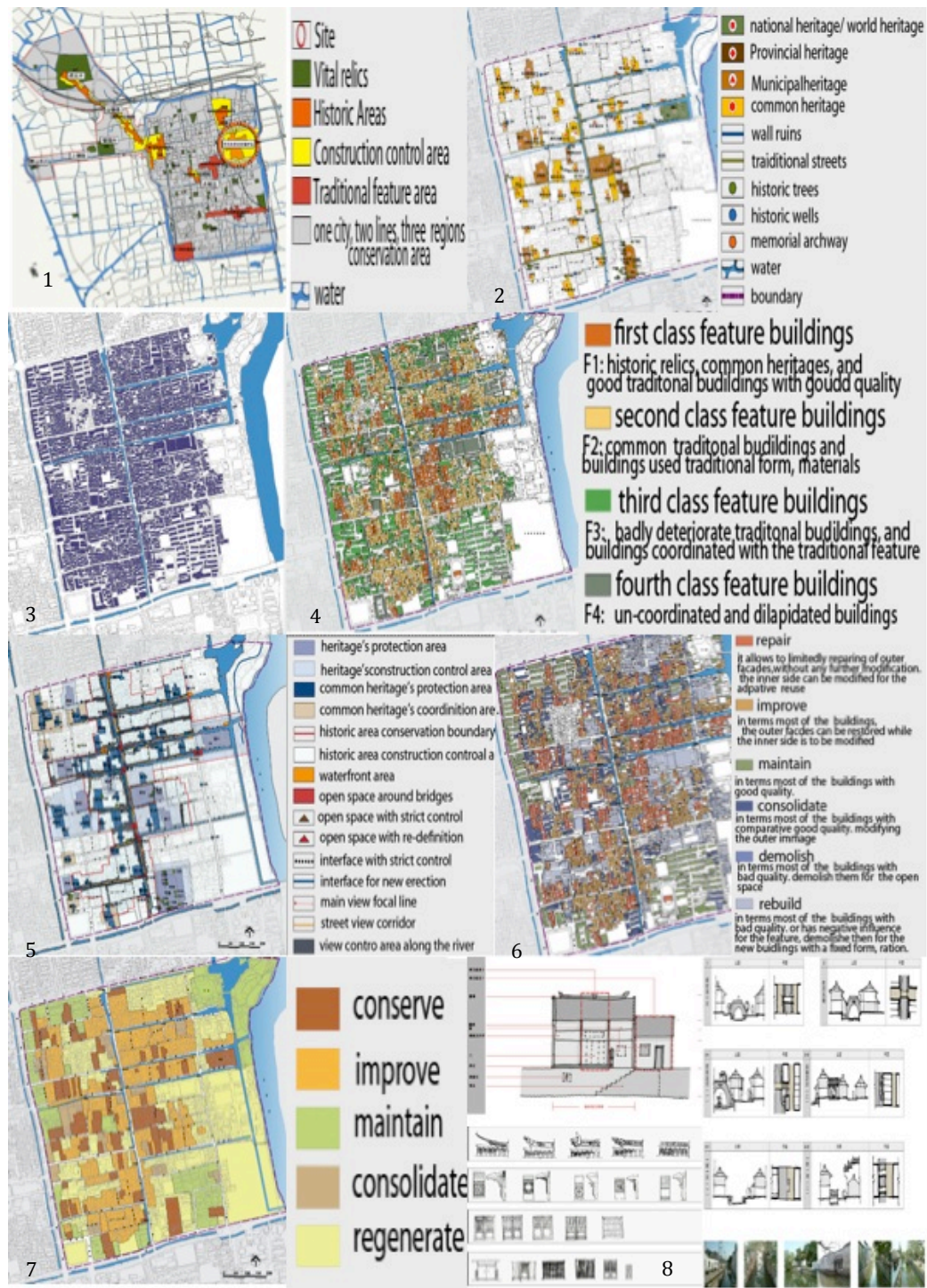


Figure 1-22: the Pingjiang Historic District conservation Plan

Suzhou, as known as the Oriental Venice, has been one of the most famous historic cities for 2500 years. The whole space structure exists and it is full of historic heritage, see figure 1-22-1, including one World heritage, 10 provincial heritage, and 64 municipal heritage, see figure 1-22-2. The traditional feature is embodied by moats and rivers, wall, bridges, streets, civic dwellings, gardens, guildhalls, temples, wells, trees and memorial