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# [CO]HABITATION TACTICS

Imagining future spaces in architecture, city and landscape

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**TAW2018 International Scientific Conference**

from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2018 / POLIS University

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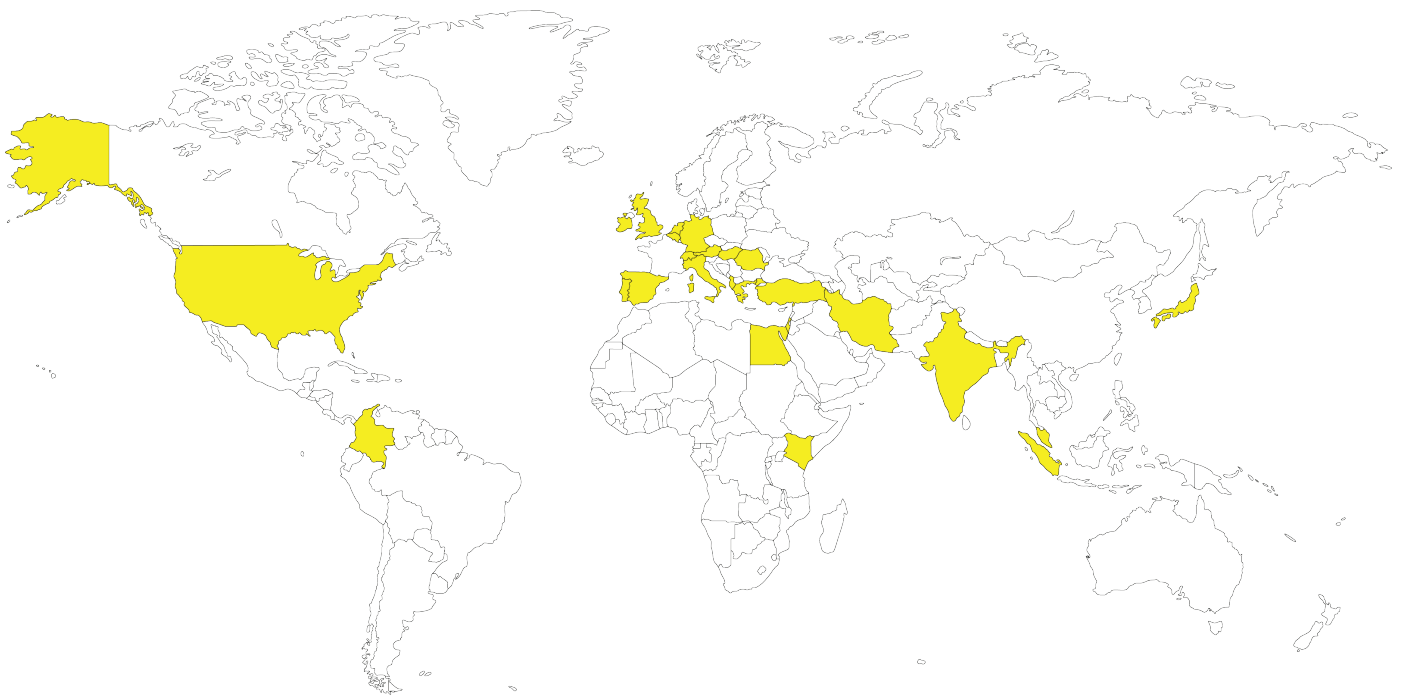
Dear participant of Tirana Architecture Week,

Thank you for joining us in TAW 2018. I strongly believe that all together we are making an historic step directly or indirectly related to Tirana's and Albanian's architecture, city and landscape. In addition, this is also a contribution for the region and wider on. At present time Europe is struggling with the instability of one of the worst recessions of its own history. Europeans are tired of the lack of flexibility and rigidity of overregulated societies where nothing happens. But here in Balkans and specifically in Albania, despite similar symptoms, things are still evolving, not because of delayed projections but because people here are very active, entrepreneurial spirit survives, and the creativity of society is in a never-ending process. In Tirana, Albania or anywhere – as they say – in Western Balkans, we are still doing fine, so we might have to learn but also to offer something to the rest of the continent, despite our endless effort to join EU. This is a land of creativity where all architects and city experts feel just great: amazed, shocked, revolted, confused, enthusiastic, inspired, etc. This is due to the fact that there are layers of a real self-generative city.

Let's not forget that Tirana is an example of creativity. So, let's use such energy in a positive way and let's open a debate that might be useful for everyone. TAW is an academic event which gives you the opportunity to come and share your professional passion or nightmare. Enjoy time with us. There is not a clear recipe but there is always a solution out there to be discovered with passion and commitment. Join POLIS University, Co-PLAN Institute and our network of creative partners. I believe we all have something in common that can help to educate the new generation of architects who can re-appropriate the city and its needs, including those of real dignitary architecture. This is the point where the architect rediscovers its own place, space and meaning within society.

Enjoy TAW 2018! Enjoy U\_POLIS and Tirana!





*The papers submitted to the conference are coming from the following countries: Albania, Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey, USA, Hungary, Belgium, Egypt, Iran, Lebanon, India, Colombia, Romania, Switzerland, Portugal, Austria, United Kingdom, Germany and Japan.*

The turn of the 21st century has been marked by dramatic changes in the political, social and environmental panorama, which are deeply affecting the way we live today: terrorism, migration and global warming are certainly the most pressing issues, and they are putting at risk our very life on this planet. So far we have come to acknowledge that we must simply coexist with such problems and learn to live with their consequences in our everyday life. But while coexistence refers to the mere - and often imposed - action of living together without any productive interaction, co-habitation implies living together peacefully, while promoting some form of exchange. This is why we believe that in the future architecture, city, and landscape should approach such emergencies fostering interaction and productive exchanges between different disciplines and cultures.

Co-habitation can be achieved through tactics, which offer the possibility to generate new creative spaces within the fields of architecture, city and landscape. Tactics - a term, which evokes the ancient Greek expression art of arrangement - are actions undertaken by, or addressed towards, the actual consumers/users. Such actions are flexible, they can be continuously modified, reshaped and adapted to cope with external interferences.

The International Scientific Conference - organized in the framework of Tirana Architecture Week 2018 - aims at exploring contemporary research activities and design tactics that deal with the topic of co-habitation from different perspectives and within different fields of interest, directly or indirectly related to architecture, city, and landscape. Through the observation of different tactics adopted by researchers and professionals, the hope is to identify new research and design trajectories.

Within this broader framework, three contexts (architecture, city, and landscape) and eight topics related to the concept of co-habitation (climate change, ecosystem, energy transitions, memory, migration, mobility, technology, and tourism) have been identified. Contributions from the fields of sociology, architecture, urbanism, planning, leisure and cultural studies, geography, anthropology are welcome, as much as other sciences not mentioned above.



**Laura Pedata** is an Architect and researcher, her main interest lies in observation, analysis and representation of urban landscape conditions and environmental regeneration strategies. Her most recent design research initiatives are focused on residual landscapes in transitioning cities and on the reassessment of their role within the urban context, considering them as a potential ground for future urban development. Currently Laura is lecturer in Landscape Architecture and Sustainable Design at POLIS University, where she received her Doctoral degree in Architecture, University of Ferrara – POLIS University. She also works as bioclimatic and landscape design consultant and takes part in EU funded research projects. Laura holds a Master in Architecture from “La Sapienza” University, Rome and a Masters of Architecture II degree (M.Arch.II) from UCLA. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 2007. Laura is a Licensed Architect since 2007 and was co-principal of the architecture office ‘ungroup’ until 2011. From 2009 to 2011 she was an Adjunct Professor in Landscape Architecture and Architecture at University of Rome “La Sapienza”, and from 2012 to 2013 she was employed by SOM in San Francisco.



**Enrico Porfido** is a licensed architect graduated at Ferrara University. His research activity started in 2012, joining ClusterTheory - a multidisciplinary research group focused on theoretical approach in contemporary architecture practices. In 2013 he studied at Oslo School of Architecture (AHO), where he continued his research activity working on Santo Domingo grid. His working experience at landscape office PROAP in Lisbon, introduced him in the landscape design panorama. In 2014 he cofounded “pais(vi)agem”, an independent research group that aims to develop an innovative touristic model, using it as tool for regenerating and protecting the landscape. Since 2015 he is a collaborator of the departmental research unit Sealine of Ferrara University. Now he is a researcher and lecturer at POLIS University, developing a research on tourism development in Balkan countries, with a specific focus on the Albanian coastal territory. Recently he has been invited as external expert in the Landscape Master of UPC (Polytechnic University of Catalonia) in Barcelona. He is also member of the research unit Institut Habitat Turisme i Territori, UPC Barcelona and University of Malaga.



**Loris Rossi** graduated in architecture in 2004 at “La Sapienza” University of Rome, Master degree in Architecture “Ludovico Quaroni”. He was awarded a PhD scholarship in Architectural Composition and Theory at “La Sapienza” and he developed part of his PhD dissertation research at the Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of UCLA, in Los Angeles. He was an adjunct professor at the Five Year Master course in Architecture EU of “La Sapienza”. From 2005–2011 he was co-founder of the ungroup Architecture office based in Rome. Since October 2011 he is a Full time Professor at the POLIS University in Tirana, from 2012 till 2013 he was Dean of faculty in Planning and Urban Design. In January 2015 he was Visiting Faculty Member at UCLA Department of Architecture & Urban Design, Los Angeles California. Currently he is Head of the Applied Research Department. His most recent research field is centered on observation, analysis and investigation in the context of Urban expressions, where the character of spontaneous processes is a manifestation of interrupted city images.

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**William Veerbeek**

*PhD - UNESCO IHE Delft Institute for Water Education (NLD)*



### Opening lecture

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**Stephan Trüby** is Professor for Architecture and Cultural Theory at University of Stuttgart. After studying architecture at the AA School in London, he initially worked as an architect in firms in Zurich, Berlin, and Munich, before going on to teach architecture theory from 2001 to 2007 at the University of Stuttgart, where he was a research assistant at IGMA, and from 2007 to 2009 at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (HfG) as a visiting professor. From 2009 to 2014 he ran the English-language postgraduate program MAS Scenography / Spatial Design at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) and from 2012 to 2014 he was also a lecturer in architecture theory at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. He was head of research and development for the 2014 Venice Architecture Biennale. His best-known publications are *architektur\_theorie.doc: Texte seit 1960* (edited with Gerd de Bruyn, Birkhäuser, 2003), *5 Codes: Architektur, Paranoia und Risiko in Zeiten des Terrors* (edited by Igmade, Birkhäuser, 2006), *Exit-Architecture: Design between War and Peace* (Springer, 2008), *The World of Madelon Vriesendorp* (with Shumon Basar, AA Publications, 2008), *Hertzianismus: Elektromagnetismus in Architektur, Design und Kunst* (Fink, 2009), and *Germania, Venezia: The German Entries to the Venice Architecture Biennale since 1991* (with Verena Hartbaum, Fink, 2016).

### International Scientific Speakers

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**Sotir Dhamo** is one of the founders of POLIS University, and currently is the Administrator of the Founding Board of this university. He is an architect and urban planner with a long experience in these fields. He participated in several research studies conducted by the Institute of Architecture and Urban Planning since the early '90s, and later he contributed in other public and non-governmental organizations such as the Ministry of Public Works, Co-Plan, etc. In addition, he has earned an Executive Master degree in public administration from the Syracuse University in US, as well as other post-graduate qualifications. He taught for some years in the Polytechnic University in Tirana as a guest professor, and currently he is teaching urban design and site planning analyses in POLIS University. Among other things, he is co-founder of Metro\_POLIS, a studio acting in the field of Architecture; co-founder of Forum A+P, the scientific journal of POLIS University, the only Albanian professional periodic in the fields of architecture and urban planning, which is published only in Albanian version.



**Camillo Boano** is Professor of Urban Design and Critical Theory at The Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU). He is Co-Director of the UCL Urban Laboratory co-Director of the Building and Urban Design in Development MSc at the DPU. Camillo's research has centred on the complex encounters between critical theory, radical philosophy and urban design processes, specifically engaging with informal urbanisations, urban collective actions, as well as crisis-generated urbanisms. He is working on a series of interconnected research projects in Latin America, South East Asia and the Middle East on urban infrastructures, habitability and city-wide upgrade. Prior to joining UCL, Camillo worked in development and architectural practice for a number of years, became a research fellow at the Refugee Studies Centre in Oxford, joined the World Habitat Research Unit in Switzerland, and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology where he worked on a number of research and consultancy projects concerned with environmental forced migration, humanitarian urbanism, temporary shelters and post-disaster housing reconstruction. He is author *The Ethics of a Potential Urbanism: Critical Encounters Between Giorgio Agamben and Architecture* (2017), and two edited books *Urban Geopolitics. Rethinking Planning in Contested Cities* (2018) with Jonathan Rokem and *Neoliberalism and Urban Development in Latin America: The Case of Santiago* (2018) with Francisco Vergara-Perucich.





**Maria Goula** is an Associate Professor at Cornell University in the Department of Landscape Architecture. For over 20 years she taught and worked professionally in Barcelona, Spain. She develops research on coastal tourism, especially in regard to the interpretation and reinvention of leisure patterns regarding coastal dynamics. Being herself a designer, she is mainly interested in translating interdisciplinary knowledge on the coast into design protocols. The spectrum of her research covers the history of Mediterranean coastal tourism and Landscape.



**Thomas Dillinger** studied Spatial Planning at Vienna University of Technology and completed in 2003 his PhD thesis in the field of Endogenous Regional Development. From 1993 till 2005 he was lecturer at the Institute for Urban Design and Planning. Since 2005, he is head of the Centre of Regional Planning and Development at the Faculty of Architecture and Spatial Planning, Vienna University of Technology. He was visiting Professor in Gdansk, Sofia, Novi Sad, Pristina and Tirana. He organized several joint study projects in the field of urban and regional planning. Actually he is the national coordinator of the CEEPUS Urban innovations networks. He is also involved in a Smart City Project in the context of a new build regional mobility hub in Vienna. Recently he was involved in designing the Regional Framework Plan for the area north of Vienna. In the past he also was involved in designing the Regional Masterplan for the surrounding of Bratislava. Since 2013 Vice dean for Academic Affairs in Spatial Planning at Vienna University of Technology. He is the National Representative of Austria in AESOP.



**William Veerbeek** is one of the founders of the Flood Resilience Group at Unesco IHE-Delft, Institute for Water Education in Delft, The Netherlands. He has a wide experience in area of urban climate adaptation in The Netherlands as well as internationally. His work was instrumental in the refinement of national flood impact assessment tools, which were tested in Dutch paradigm shifting projects like UFM-Dordrecht and Rotterdam-based projects in the Dutch Knowledge for Climate programme. He worked extensively in megacities like Beijing, Dhaka and Mumbai where his work focussed on the development of long term urban growth projections and subsequent changes in disaster risk. Strengthening IHE's mission in capacity development, William has been training many cities in climate adaption, especially in Southeast Asia. Currently he is developing a city-to-city learning network on green-blue infrastructure in the North Sea region.



**Michelangelo Russo** is full Professor of Urban Planning and is the head of the Laboratory of Urbanism and Urban Design at the Department of Architecture, University of Naples Federico II, where he is since 2013 the Coordinator of the PhD Program in Architecture. He is a member of several national and international research groups. Since 2014 he is President of the SIU, Italian Society of Urbanists, the Academic and Scientific Society of Italian professors of Urbanism. He is carrying out financed researches of national and international interest. His research activities, design oriented, deal with themes, knowledge and the phenomena of contemporary urban design in relation to the contemporary cities changes, urbanized areas, landscapes, and the complex interaction between environment, space, ecology.

### ***Closing lecture***



**Jason Hilgefort** is an urbanist|architect who studied at the University of British Columbia, University of Cincinnati, and is currently a PHD candidate at RMIT. His work experience includes working with Peter Calthorpe, Rahul Mehrotra, MaxwanA+U, and ZUS. He founded Land+Civilization Compositions, a Rotterdam|Hong Kong based design studio. He was a subcurator in the Shenzhen/Hong Kong Urbanism/Architecture Biennale. He is the Academic Director the Aformal Academy for urbanism|landscape|public art in Shenzhen. He was also a regular writer, contributing to assorted publications over the years including Volume, uncube, SITE and more. He recently founded the Institute for Autonomous Urbanism.

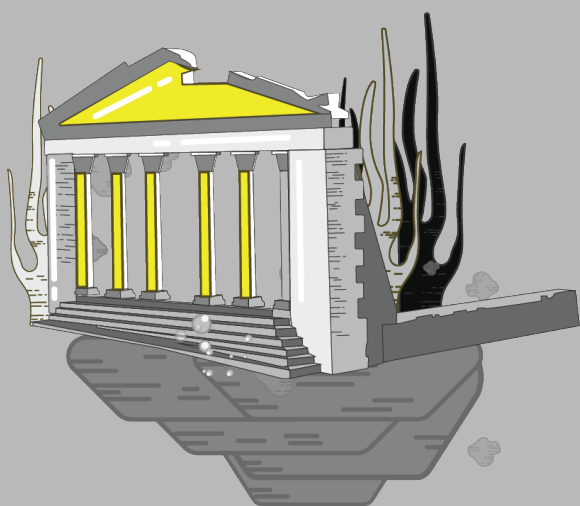


## Notes

All papers presented at this conference have undergone a process of **double blind review** by the members of the international scientific committee. The quotation system adopted is the **Harvard Referecing System**.

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[MEM/22]



# Memory And Reeneration Through Segregation: The Heritage Preservation In Lijiao Village In The City

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## abstract

*Villages in the city (VICs) have become a crucial topic within Chinese urban studies, spatially exposing the contradictions between fast urbanization processes and former rural communities. Beside the social implications of these areas encapsulated in metropolitan cityscapes, their redevelopment into future gated residential communities poses a series of questions about local socio-spatial practices put in transition. For instance their overcrowded built environment, absorbing historical stratifications, is under extreme pressures facing “pro-growth” municipal urban planning visions. Lijiao village represents in Guangzhou a crucial case study to illustrate how local listed cultural heritage could confront tested tabula rasa approaches, redefining the processes embedded in these kind of regeneration projects. The paper aims to demonstrate how the presence of historical relics, permitted the activation of a series of processes diverging from the neoliberal strategies applied by Chinese urban planning bureaucracy, questioning alternative methodologies which had to re-scale actions and cooperate with local consistency. On one side the creation of lists of buildings under preservation activated the compact intervention of institutions and experts, determining rules affecting the negotiation through legitimated procedures. On the other the intervention of the private investor, seeking an efficient quantity distribution over the demolished village, perceived local memory a tangible obstacle opposing the development. Their contraposition promoted formalized spatial boundaries instead of integrating differences. Segregating cultural heritage from its local morphology, cleaning up history, therefore appears as the spatial compromise to safeguard relics elsewhere forcibly demolished or indifferently relocated. Preservation tactics and new urban development, stays one next to the other without considering the collective memory built over centuries of local practices. The spatial codification to promote development, seems the only way to surpass the contradictions of thirty years of fast urban development.*

**keywords** Heritage, Preservation, Urban Villages, Urban Planning, China

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## Introduction

Chinese rapid urbanization has strongly influenced urban studies literature of the last two decades, questioning how the deep political and economical reforms had crucial spatial consequences and trying to understand if it is possible to speak about a “Chinese urban uniqueness” (Ma, 2002). The “capitalism with Chinese characteristics” launched by now 40 year ago, has unleashed developing forces that has brought the country to pass from 20,8% to 57% of his urbanized population between 1982 and 2016 (Chen et. al, 2011; World Bank, 2017), determining the biggest rural to urban migration in history, framing a number of contradictory social phenomena and questioning which could be the future of the actual urban consistency under high market pressures.

Considering the Chinese urban transition as a “modernization without modernism” (Fan et al, 2006:8), meaning an economical and technological progress without putting into question political cohesion, it has been obvious that terms like “local community”, “land rights”, “heritage”, had to confront the uneven possibilities offered by a dual track market, deeply affecting local socio-spatial structures into areas truly aimed to host development projects. What scientific literature has defined as “urban villages” or “villages in the city” (VICs) or again “city in between the villages” (Al, 2014), probably represents the best spatial contrast regarding the transformation of these meanings within the Chinese urban revolution. Metropolitan areas have enlarged their spatial extensions pushed under the economic reforms, encapsulating these former local communities run under a collective land right regime, deeply transforming their interrelation with the territory as well as their social composition becoming the preferential sites for migrants workers. In the rapid transformation of Chinese society, these villages passed from being

isolated rural communities to emerging real estate protagonists, hardly modifying their relationship with land possession, spatial dwelling and urban role.

The modification of their previous morphological structure caused on one side sanitization problems, especially due to high density building operation which saturated community cropfields, but on the other influenced urban residents public opinion, perceiving these location as “obstacle to the urban development” or “urban cancers”, determining precise redevelopment policies and municipal programs (Li and Wu, 2014).

Within this intricate background formed by local informal businesses, municipal political perspective and market pressures, the definition of operational methodologies in preserving local spatial features confronting tabula rasa procedures appears as a collective and professional challenge. Considering the weak bureaucratic base and the continuous urban policy improvement concerning these locations, the aim of this paper is to reveal how a precise case study like that one of Lijiao village in Guangzhou, could become the protagonist in defining best tactics in governing local decision making processes.

In fact the city of Guangzhou, localized within urbanized Pearl River Delta in China, with its 1.142 villages has often represented in scientific literature the place where to investigate the interplay between the local community and the planning visions of the municipality (Liu, 2015). This especially for its political efforts in promoting in the last decade a series of policies to realize their redevelopment avoiding as much as possible social protests, as well as reinvigorating real estate market through the re-absorption of huge parcel of lands under state control.

In 2009 the municipality has promoted the “one village one policy” principle (yicun yice), which stated the necessity to conduct village transformation under a negotiating progressive approach with local communities: conceiving “every renovation as a research...” officials had to “combine the policy with the reality” (Wu et al, 2013). In the same year Guangzhou officially adhered to the “three oldies” redevelopment policy (sanjiu gaizao), which defined a comprehensive redevelopment not only of the old villages present in the city (jiu cunzhuang), but also the former brownfields (jiu changfang) and the historical city centre (jiu chengzhen), through the creation of lists where to concentrate planning efforts.

This is why, considering the strong governance attention around VICs, in this case the topic of heritage building preservation has to be intended separated from the more its more general discourses, while more linked to the municipal governance issues, aimed to surpass their problematic spatial consistency. Therefore urban policies, planning and compensation procedures define the basis to better understand the intricate framework of actors where historical building preservation has to struggle to affirm its operative space. It had to generate cooperative tactics together with groups of interests involved in the redevelopment process, in order to protect local cultural features and preserve the local collective memory built along the centuries.

In this framework single case studies, like that one of Lijaio village here selected, represents even in the municipal governance programs the testing ground for re-absorbing heritage relics in the transformation process. In case of its institutional success it will be become, part of those Chinese local best practices aimed in “deepening the reforms” (Song et al., 2014), defining a mature urban management (Altrock et al, 2013) and letting the possibility that urban development and historical preservation could “go hand in hand” (Logan, 2002).

## Objectives

Likewise it was confirmed by interviews released by officials to news agencies (Qiu, 2010), the promulgation “three oldies” policy in Guangzhou has been mainly set to formalized the land-use appropriation of new areas suitable for transformation accompanied to a general sanitization of the dense VICs: a precise political mission with spatial consequences. Considering this, the main objective of the paper is to unveil the spatial results between the conflictual relationship between relics preservation and extensive tabula rasa operations, investigated through the analysis of the project implementation of Lijaio village in Guangzhou. The selection of Lijiao as testing ground for a methodology aimed to cross project implementation and stakeholders intervention within Chinese urban planning, meant to take the municipal perspective in the way it support its governance improvements. A critical analysis around its redevelopment process could be capable to represent why Lijiao in could became in the next future a strategic reference fostering cultural and political debate.

The spatial analysis of the confrontation between listed buildings and extensive demolition in Lijiao, stays together other important secondary objectives, necessary to stress the attention of the spatial transition in Chinese urban redevelopment.

First of all understanding the role of listed heritage buildings facing the urban development programs promoted by a Chinese metropolis like Guangzhou, and how they could be able to trace alternatives in urban planning strategies. Looking at a long established tradition within Chinese legislation over preservation system, where listing procedures aimed to safeguard and legitimate the preservation of single relics have overcome a comprehensively approach towards the traditional neighborhood scale, VICs question to improve new tools in managing a stratified local culture built over spatial features.



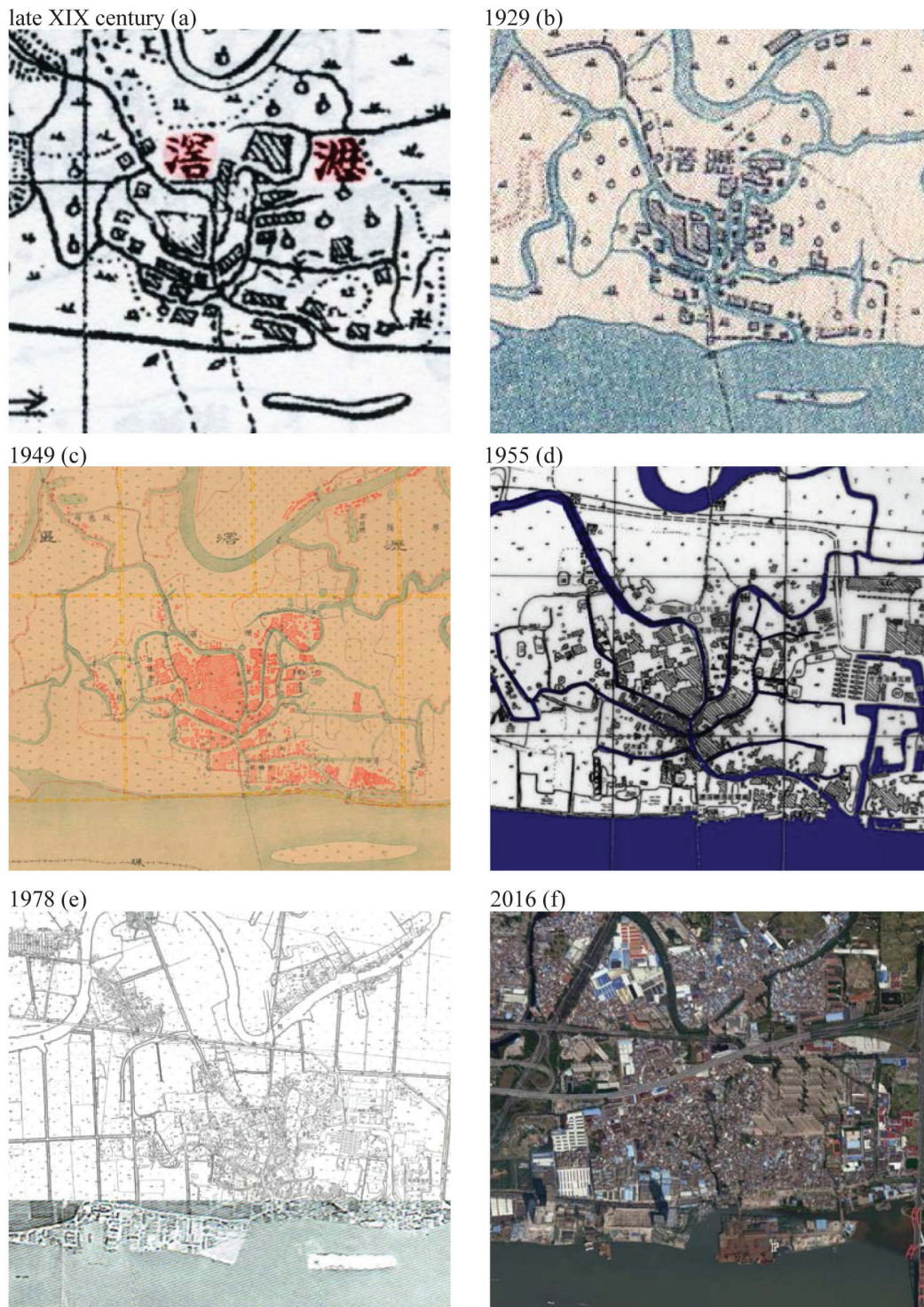


figure 1. a-b-c-d-e-f: Lijiao historical morphological development between late XIX century and 2016. Sources: "Record of Panyu County" (a); Drawings of the Urban context: Guangzhou ancient atlas (guang zhou shi cheng shi jian she dang an guan bian zhi), Map Publishing House of Guangzhou, Guangzhou: 1991 [in Chinese] - Urban Elephant Office (b-c-d); (e) Atlas of historical images of Guangzhou in 1978" (2008). Guangzhou: Guangzhou Urban development Archives. [in Chinese] (f); Landsat Image - Google Earth 2016.

Secondly to overview the relation between a single urban transformation project and the more general urban planning visions programmed by a Chinese municipality. The transcalar relation between District level planning and the village redevelopment, defines a set of mutual influences capable to strongly influence the spatial negotiation at the local sphere. In this case listed building not only represent tangible obstacle to indifferent demolition, but also cultural objects raising question towards which planning methodology has to be use in order to combine long term municipal objectives and the preservation of local spatial features.

Thirdly defining the groups of stakeholders actively called to participate in the decision making process, in order to detect the institutional alliances formed behind the redevelopment project and which spatial transformation they propose to support project implementation occurred.

All these objectives place in the middle a fundamental question: which is the spatial correlation between preservation procedures and the actors behind the transformation of VICs? In this sense focusing on the roles played by institutions and interested groups is crucial to code the forces behind a single project.

The municipal governance dedicated in defining strategies to manage VICs modification expresses how delicate and conflicting is the topic of building preservation in urban villages, considering the many aspect in their extensive transformation. Regarding their redevelopment Guangzhou mostly followed the two principles of “not investing directly” in the operation and “not to carry out profit-driven real estate development” (Altrock and Schoon, 2011). In this sense the municipality guide the transformation offering the management of the negotiation between local community and investors, surveillance of the procedures and experts consultation. For this reasons the role of the real estate company invited to participate in the projects, becomes nodal in defining planned solutions with a profit oriented purpose, balancing the necessity in convincing villagers in supporting the offered money compensation and the oscillation of the real estate market.

Considering the huge market forces behind the transformation of Lijiao due to high money compensations, and the attitude demonstrated in the last year of urban revolution occurred in China under the principle of “one leveling, five connections” (Yeh, 1985), meaning the application of extensive tabula rasa procedures to support fast urban development, the risk of neglecting the insertion of building heritage within regeneration projects is quite high.

It is for this reason that in order to balance the powers behind these renovation projects, higher officials and experts have recently supported programs aimed to place in the centre the role heritage as one of the key element. This awareness has emerged thanks to the combination of long years of building inventories, the rise of professionalism, the intervention of academics and politicians (Du Cros and Lee, 2007) as well as the a growing media attention (especially on dedicated blogs) towards the clash between urban upgrade and local culture conservation.

It is only considering the contemporary ongoing reforming attitude of dedicated institutions and departments, the emergence of the role of the experts in supporting public municipal governance, the profit oriented approach towards villages transformation entire operation, that is possible to better understand the experimental ground within which building preservation could be inscribed in the transformation of urban villages. It is for this reason that the Lijiao case study is more presented as a tactic trying to emerge from a simple spatial and monetary negotiation, instead of an institutionalized or already tested procedure.

## Methodology

The contribution of the heritage preservation strategies within the transformation of Lijiao, could be unveiled thanks to the mutual correlation among legitimated and involved institutions, the reconstruction of the main planned intervention and comparing their intentions with the existence spatial conditions. Critically observing the transformation overlapping the processes provoked by selected stakeholders and their spatial consequences, this case study referred to a “grid overlay” approach (Tian and Shen, 2011), already utilized in decoding Chinese masterplanning operations in comparison with local projects implementations. This opened the possibility in reframing municipality planning initiative restarting from a deeper understanding of the actual conditions of land utilization, filling through maps what propaganda set aside and reflecting on the spatial consequences of the village transformation within the fast growing metropolis. This methodology has been applied to Lijiao in order to determine the role of heritage preservation within the complex debate of its extensive demolition, focusing on the spatial deviations derived from its insertion in a discourse involving urban governance, economic interests and planning perspective.

Confronting the different versions of the regeneration project together with the insertion of new stakeholders within the negotiation, it was possible to highlight how Lijiao's relics preservation extended to a comprehensive redevelopment of its historical core instead of relying only to specific intangible buildings, paving the way to redefine the methodology towards the transformation of urban villages.

The process of transformation of Lijiao has started on 9 September 2011 with the submission to the “3 oldies” policy arranged by the “Lijiao Economic Union”, the village shareholding company responsible to carry one the transformation process. This meant the creation of the first preliminary studies, constituting in planning proposal, land use distribution and a first draft for the heritage conservation. It is interesting to note that at that stage of the project only the main ancestral hall, belonging to Wei's family (figure 2) has been outlined as immovable relic following the Provincial lists, while others have been intended to be demolished or moved to a new dedicated area.

This low attention determined the intervention of municipal departments, recalling a deeper attention towards local preservation strategies. On 20th September and 10th October 2011, the News and Media Department



(even responsible for cultural relics) recognized 15 buildings to be preserved. The same list has been invoked by the Urban Planning Bureau of Guangzhou which informed on 12th October the Haizhu District Urban Renewal Office to consider the results of the Third National Relic Survey promoted by the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (Blumenfield and Silverman, 2013) as the basis for future heritage preservation implementation. This demonstrated how the hierarchical Chinese heritage management system (Zhu, 2012), led to strongly influence local projects due to important political changes occurring at the national level.



figure 2. Wei ancestors Hall main entrance captured from the first courtyard. Sources: made by the author November 2015.

Between 2011 and 2013 Provincial, municipal and District institutions began to invite Lijiao in promoting a better and comprehensive involvement of heritage preservation within the redevelopment project, determining an institutional alliance in stressing around the topic. Even Guangzhou Mayor Chen Jianhua on July 2013, stressed the importance to respect the provided heritage lists provided, and set the basis not only for historical buildings, but also for environmental protection. Taking into consideration the low interest demonstrated towards heritage preservation in former Guangzhou's urban villages in the name of a necessary fast urban redevelopment, Lijiao is representing a new political stress even surpassing the merely application of preservation legislation.

The institutional convergence brought the village to involve in the process an important real estate company, capable not only to directly invest in the area, but also to assure the necessary expert management. Through public auction, in 2013 has been selected the ZhuGuang Holding Company Ltd, one of the biggest player in Guangzhou. The cooperation between the Lijiao Economic Union and the ZhuGuang Group resulted in a land division proposal submitted in 2013 (fig. 3b) where the redevelopment of the village tried its best to fit into the newest Haizhu Eco-City Masterplan promoted in 2012 by the municipality. The biggest efforts made by the real estate company were aimed to adjust the infrastructural network in order to incorporate within the grid the largest number of listed relics (figure 3a). But at the same time this solution just considered the position of the historical building as intangible obstacles surrounded by new high-rise towers, creating a difficult co-existence between elements with an average FAR (Floor Area Ratio) around 5 and 6, positioned next to the lower historical ones. This plan aimed to satisfy both the demand of increasing as much as possible the revenues from the area, but it also demonstrated the difficulties in matching already tested residential communities together with urban planning regulations and the recent attention towards heritage conservation.

It is for this reason that in 2013 ZhuGuang Group invited Urban Elephant Architectural Studio (hereinafter called UEA), a design company based in Guangzhou long time interested in cultural relics preservation in China, to cooperate in defining a new masterplan that could find a good compromise between the future urban planning development and the historical preservation in Lijiao's inner core. The invitation of skilled experts on one side reveals the growing attention towards the emancipation of a precise professionalism, and on the other to interpose their role between authorities (not directly involved) and investors (seeking for a profit oriented approach). The intervention of UEA could be reassumed in two main strategies, fundamental to understand the shift from intending conservation based on single elements to a more comprehensive local development.

First of all UEA proposed to enrich the lists proposed by upper level institutions including private residential building which resisted the brutal densification occurred during the last thirty years of metropolitan economic urban, representing an important legacy characterizing the spatial living of the ancient Lijiao. Secondly the approach was based on conceiving the village not just as an agglomeration of relics, but instead a precise coded environment where natural and artificial elements coexisted along its history defining a precise image for local culture.

The creation of a longer list of building preservation resulted on one side with the favorably support from the municipality, but on the contrary provoked an additional negotiation with the real estate company: their larger number could create in the future a conspicuous loss in terms of possible revenues, even considering the little amount of money received from the municipality for their restoration. This testimony what urban village tabula rasa methodology is really made of within Chinese metropolis, that is the easiest way to surpass local morphology restarting from an empty space, erasing local differentiation which require time, expert consultancies and a larger investment.



Figure 3 a-b: The passage from the first solution proposed by ZhuGuang Group to that one proposed in collaboration with UAE. The design of the inner core of the village completed changed the planned grid division, merging different functions and natural elements is a new cultural cluster. Source: made by the author elaborating data from Urban Elephant Studio



The second one represents the tactic utilized by UEA to combine historical and environmental preservation with the new functional destination of the area (figure 4). This brought to deform the contents and objectives of the municipal masterplan, aimed to dispose quantities within an regular infrastructural grid, to focus over a neighborhood scale of analysis. The plan realized by the ZhuGuang Group in 2013 has been updated reconsolidating the present local morphology within the municipal grid. The most innovative aspect was based in conceptualizing the plan starting from the local famous "8 scenic spots" of Lijiao, specific places mentioned in XIX century poems aimed to eulogize Lijiao built environment, in order to define morphological patterns where listed buildings would have been inserted. Therefore UEA created in the middle of the village a bigger plot with a lower FAR including all the ancient relics and moving to other blocks of the real estate intervention high-rise towers.

In addition the expert intervention stressed the attention to intend the main canal as "immovable relics" likewise the others historical elements of the village. The limitation of the utilization of cars, the increasing of pedestrian ways and the correlation of natural resources, heritage relics and new functions in defining a new built environment, gave the chance to intended redevelopment firstly as cultural based operation. To achieve this goal the project has been enriched with a deeper understanding of the local spatial and social conditions, surveying and negotiating with villagers and authorities a new disposition to surpass the previous coded environment simply arranged by the real estate company.



figure 4: Urban regeneration proposal made by Urban Elephant Studio for the inner core of Lijiao village, including all the main listed heritage buildings. Source: Urban Elephant Studio.

Tracing the spatial implementation occurred thanks to stakeholders intervention in Lijiao redevelopment, highlights the importance in decoding within the authoritarian local state governance of Chinese metropolitan areas how transformation could occur through the overlapping presence of different contribution coming from strong social alliances. The awareness around the topic of historical building preservation has been placed in the middle of the negotiation as spatial and cultural aspects capable to influence already tested institutionalized procedures and becoming public debate in continuously deepening the policy reforms in urban management. Revealing the social and experts contribution within urban regeneration projects opens a new conceptualization about the decision making procedures regarding urban villages, passing from the too simplistic top-down bottom up dichotomy, to a more intricate interchange between skilled groups of involved stakeholders.

## Results

The evolution of the plans for the historical core of Lijiao, well represent both the spatial negotiations between different actors and the deeper cultural framework within which new concepts and strategies suggested by experts could become crucial testing ground to improve future applications. The masterplan proposed by UEA demonstrated that the listing methodology posed by the Chinese legislation framework it is not enough to support a sophisticated transformation within the growing debate on heritage preservation at the national level: additional immaterial and material features deeply determining local culture had to be considered in order to improve the built environment within the more general redevelopment.

Under this point of view at every stage of Lijiao's project implementation it was possible to detect how different element of the transformation (building heritage, natural resources, existing transportation system, huge asset of informal fabrics) and future objectives (preservation, urban sanitation, profit-oriented operation), were input to manage the whole process under an holistic perspective, guided from legitimated institutions and group of interests. In this sense heritage preservation has become in Lijiao the pretext to create a spatial and institutionalized compromise, permitting that strategies supporting conservation could be reinserted both in a wider urban planning scheme and in the framework of the municipal "pro-growth" alliances.

But if on one side the negotiation could be welcomed as an important achievement, on the other it defined few important spatial consequences that in more general would stress the future Chinese urban agenda in defining tools to support preservation strategies. Firstly the conservation of Lijiao's historical inner core determined a physical separation from the rest of the intervention, where a tabula rasa approach has been never questioned following already tested extensive demolitions (figure 5). This suggests that even if the planned grid has been deformed, homogenization through functional blocks continue to represent the way to intend the sanitization procedure for urban villages. Secondly Lijiao relics preservation is based on cleaning up history (Sheperd and Yu, 2013), especially regarding the more recent constructions, basically reframing listed building within a newest intervention, with the creation of a cultural Park as the solely strategy to improve local quality without losing the support from investors and institutions. Thirdly even considering the project arranged by Urban Elephant an important progress in urban village transformation, the compromise made up with the future land division, admits the difficulty to pass from single building preservation to the restoration of the existing morphology. It has never been stressed out the importance of the geometry of the ancient settlement: even if has been fully compromised by contingent additions, irresponsible demolitions, it still represents features characterizing its everyday life, where its development contradictions could have been maintained next to the heritage relics.

Substantially the persistence of Lijiao village, intended as a the cohesion between social links and its produced spaces determining a precise cultural image, appears unbalanced between the monumentalisation of icons separated from their original ground and the complete demolition of other portions in order to respect the grid created by the planning authorities. Questioning wherever Lijiao will be still detectable, as it happened for example for the "hutong" neighborhood in Beijing or the "shikumen" alleys redevelopment in Shanghai, in term of social space production (Lefebvre, 1991) after the transformation remains an open question.

## Conclusions

Taking into consideration the different spatial configurations of the heritage preservation in Lijiao it is possible to outline few considerations, involving institutions in supporting practices which could become in the next future an importance reference for others urban villages distributed in Guangzhou.

In Lijiao the preservation of historical buildings has shown a progressive attitude: based on a quantitative distribution of listed relics, the final projects has been able to pass from simple and static recognition, to the integration into a disposition aimed to define a new image for the local built environment.



The reluctant position of the real estate company in accepting the spatial conformation has to be seen under its political perspective. In order to obtain the fully approval from the municipal departments, as well as continuing to maintain stable social connection for further projects, heritage preservation defines on one side the erosion of financial revenues, but also strategic propaganda which could be addressed to the local community to reach a positive support.

Considering these positions, it is important to stress out who matters space, or indeed legacy, within villages in the city redevelopment? The case study of Lijiao suggests that the role played by the emerging class of skilled experts aimed to promote their professionalism, supported by media, academic debates and dedicated institution within the municipal management, is generating new tactics within Chinese heritage management. Beyond the contents of the Chinese legislation on cultural relics, their social presence becomes the node around which address future actions.

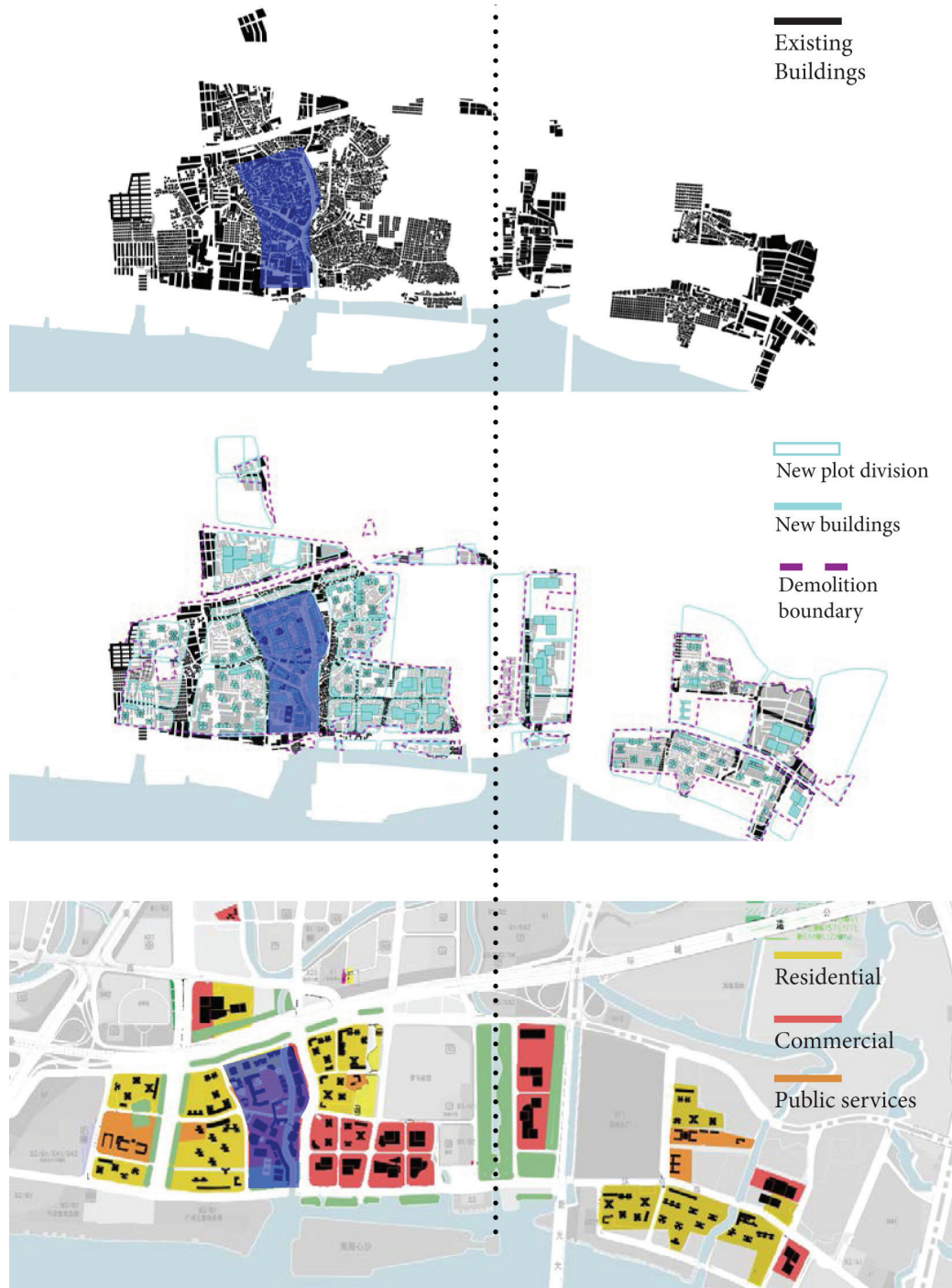


Figure 5: Overlapped scenario of the future transformation of Lijiao. (top): building consistency of the actual Lijiao village. (center) overlapping of actual condition and last urban planning division. (Below) overlapping of the new buildings distribution on the new blocks division. The blue boxes define the site managed by UEA. The black dotted lines highlights the future monumental urban axis promoted by the municipality. Source: made by the author starting from documentation of ZhuGuang Group and Urban Elephant Office.

The heritage preservation strategy detectable in Lijiao, for its innovative approach to surpass the solely requirements of the preservation legislation focused on single buildings towards built environment conservation, appeared an important step forward capable to contrast that “urbicide” occurring in fast Chinese developing metropolitan areas (Coward, 2009). In between tabula rasa approach or bureaucratic legislation application, a methodology based on the deeper study of the co-existence of different elements, raised the possibility to create that middle-scale observation of local features capable to truly affect stakeholders’ negotiations. In this sense starting from the urban planning visions until the recognition of single relics, this single case study pointed out the growing importance of a transcalar approach within Chinese urban planning methodologies, capable to become the future tools in supporting decision making processes around the transformation of local communities living environment.

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