

The Neighbourhood Museum in Qingdao's Old Town: Integrating Heritage Conservation and Education

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SGUARDO**

**BEYOND
THE GAZE**

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a cura di
edited by

Alessandro Ippoliti, Elena Svalduz

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OLTRE LO SGUARDO BEYOND THE GAZE

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LA CITTÀ CORPO **THE CITY AS A BODY**

a cura di
edited by

Benedetta Caglioti

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INTRODUZIONE

INTRODUCTION

ALESSANDRO IPPOLITI, ELENA SVALDUZ

Oltre lo sguardo/Beyon the Gaze rappresenta un'explorazione a largo raggio sulla città come oggetto da osservare e interpretare, nella storia del suo essere e divenire. Divisa in sei tomi l'opera, che raccoglie 529 contributi, nasce dall'esigenza di riflettere sulle molteplici declinazioni della storia urbana, con un approccio interpretativo, metodologico e operativo tale da mettere in gioco nuove modalità e strumenti di lettura, che possano andare *oltre lo sguardo*. Se fino al XIX secolo infatti l'approccio era prevalentemente puro-visibilistico, *oltre lo sguardo* vuole evocare il passaggio a un atteggiamento più complesso e sistematico che comprenda dinamiche sociali, economiche, culturali della città nella sua realtà storica, ma anche presente e futura. Si tratta allora di considerare la città come oggetto sul quale diverse storie, diversi strumenti e metodi d'indagine si confrontano avviando processi critici.

L'ampiezza dei contenuti e della partecipazione all'opera conferma la capacità dell'Associazione Italiana di Storia Urbana di porsi come piattaforma di confronto/incontro a favore della ricerca e del dialogo interdisciplinare per la messa a punto di strumenti di studio e divulgazione dell'*heritage* urbano. I volumi si configurano come spazi tematici tendenti a

Oltre lo sguardo/Beyon the Gaze represents a wide-ranging exploration of the city as an object to be observed and interpreted, in the history of its being and becoming. Divided into six tomes, the work, which consists of 529 contributions, stems from the need to reflect on the multiple declinations of urban history, with an interpretative, methodological and operational approach: this allows us new ways and tools of reading, which can go beyond the gaze. If until the 19th century, in fact, the approach was predominantly pure-visibilistic, beyond the gaze wants to evoke a shift to a more complex and systematic attitude that encompasses social, economic, and cultural dynamics of the city in its historical as well as present and future reality. It is then to consider the city as an object on which different histories, different tools and methods of inquiry confront each other by initiating critical processes.

The breadth of content and participation in the work confirms the ability of the Italian Urban History Association to stand as a platform for comparison/meeting in favor of research and interdisciplinary dialogue for the development of tools in favor of the study and dissemination of urban heritage. The volumes are configured as thematic spaces tending

valorizzarne la dimensione plurale, con un ragionamento comparativo e a scale diverse: andare *oltre lo sguardo* significa infatti declinare la città al microscopio e al tempo stesso guardarla attraverso una prospettiva ampia. Nei sei tomi che li contengono, i volumi affrontano temi complessi e multipli con attitudini di ricerca diverse che riguardano, tra l'altro, le funzioni delle città in rapporto alla vita economica e sociale; le pratiche abitative; la dislocazione delle attività produttive e commerciali; la mobilità urbana; la rifunzionalizzazione del patrimonio edilizio; le politiche igieniche e sanitarie; la distribuzione della ricchezza e i conflitti sociali; le rappresentazioni di città e l'uso del digitale. Ma vi sono presenti studi che si basano anche sulla rielaborazione quantitativa dei dati, per mettere insieme storia e scienze sociali, comprendendo i cambiamenti del passato e quelli in corso; altri che trattano di disuguaglianza, inclusione sociale e culturale. In questi casi andare *oltre lo sguardo* significa superare la dimensione percettiva, scavalcare barriere sociali e culturali, esplorare condizioni inique e luoghi nascosti, sotterranei o elusi, cioè la città che l'occhio non ha potuto vedere; ma anche capire quanto crisi sociale e crisi ambientale vadano di pari passo. Nei volumi emerge un dato significativo legato all'impatto dei cambiamenti climatici sugli insediamenti umani, veri e propri *hot spot* di calore, ma anche all'eccesso di turismo nelle città d'arte, alla guerra e altre forme di distruzione.

Su questi e altri temi, visti in prospettiva storica, siamo invitati tutti a riflettere, cercando di capire le strategie adottate nel passato per la soluzione di problemi, ma allo stesso tempo ad aprire lo sguardo verso nuove condizioni urbane. Anche quelle possibili tra umano e non umano, che possono essere viste come forme alternative, cioè, alla città dell'antropocene come ci racconta Telmo Pievani¹.

Oltre lo sguardo significa pensare dunque a nuovi strumenti, metodi e prospettive della

to enhance its plural dimension, with comparative reasoning and at different scales: in fact, going beyond the gaze means declining the city under the microscope and at the same time looking at it through a broad perspective. In the six tomes that contain them, the volumes address complex and multiple themes with different research attitudes that concern, among other things, the functions of cities in relation to economic and social life; the housing practices; the dislocation of productive and commercial activities; the urban mobility; the re-functionalization of the built heritage; the sanitation and hygiene policies; the distribution of wealth and social conflicts; the representations of cities and the use of the digital. But there are studies that also rely on quantitative reworking of data, to bring history and social science together, understanding past and ongoing changes; others that deal with inequality, social and cultural inclusion. In these cases, going beyond the gaze means going beyond the perceptual dimension, climbing over social and cultural barriers, exploring inequitable conditions and hidden, underground or elusive places, that is, the city that the eye could not see; but also understanding how social crisis and environmental crisis be connected. Significant data emerges in the volumes related to the impact of climate change on human settlements, real heat hot spots, but also to excess tourism in art cities, war and other forms of destruction.

On these and other issues, seen in historical perspective, we are all invited to reflect, trying to understand the strategies adopted in the past for solving problems, but at the same time to open our eyes to new urban conditions. Even those possible between human and non-human, which can be seen as alternative forms, that is, to the anthropocene city as Telmo Pievani tells us¹.

Beyond the gaze thus means thinking about new tools, methods and perspectives of

¹ <https://aisuinternational.org/le-citta-nellantropocene-cities-in-the-anthropocene/>

storia urbana. Ne offrono una panoramica i contributi qui raccolti, esito di confronti interdisciplinari, approfondimenti e revisioni all'interno di una comunità ampia, consolidatasi nel tempo con rapporti di amicizia e aperta a nuovi stimoli, che individua nella città "l'alveo di una pluralità di interessi e passioni"². Per tenere vivo questo continuo confronto e per organizzare le pubblicazioni che ne seguono, seminari e convegni sono importantissimi: fin dalle origini l'Associazione sostiene questo tipo di attività, ingiustamente sottovalutata dai parametri di valutazione di ambito universitario. Molte curatrici, autrici, autori dei contributi qui raccolti sono cresciuti, possiamo dirlo, "all'ombra dell'Aisu" o ne hanno promosso la crescita in continuità fin dal primo congresso tenutosi a Lecce nel 2002³. Sotto questo punto di vista va riconosciuto alle curatrici dei volumi, entrate nello "spirito" dell'AIU, un ruolo fondamentale: esito del lavoro volto a organizzare/riorganizzare i volumi in maniera equilibrata, le loro introduzioni ai singoli volumi danno conto di una straordinaria profondità di lettura dei temi affrontati. Francesca Romana Fiano ci offre una guida alla lettura utilizzando appropriate metafore calviniane Italo Calvino (*La città prisma*); Marta Calzolari approfondisce gli approcci di tipo quantitativo che studiano la realtà urbana contemporanea secondo parametri misurabili che riguardano il patrimonio storico (*La città misurata*); Veronica Balboni affronta storie, processi e sostrati della realtà fisica della città, mettendo al centro le stratificazioni materiali (*La città stratificata*); Benedetta Caglioti sposta invece l'attenzione sui vari meccanismi percettivi e processi interpretativi (*La città corpo*); Elena Dorato ci accompagna tra molteplici visioni utopiche e scenari distopici (*La città immaginata*); Giorgia Sala infine introduce la complessità della dimensione urbana rilevando l'importanza delle rappresentazioni,

urban history. An overview of this is offered by the contributions collected here, the outcome of interdisciplinary comparisons, insights and revisions within a broad community, consolidated over time with friendly relations and open to new stimuli, which identifies the city as "the bed of a plurality of interests and passions"². To keep this continuous confrontation alive and to organize the publications that follow, seminars and conferences are very important: since its origins, the Association has supported this type of activity, which has been unjustly undervalued by the parameters of evaluation in the university sphere. Many editors, and authors of the contributions collected here have grown, we can say, "in the shadow of Aisu" or have promoted its growth in continuity since the first congress held in Lecce in 2002³. In this respect, the editors of the volumes, who have entered into the "spirit" of the AIU, must be credited with a fundamental role: the outcome of the work aimed at organizing/reorganizing the volumes in a balanced way, their introductions to the individual volumes give an account of an extraordinary depth of reading of the topics addressed. Francesca Romana Fiano offers us a guide to reading by using appropriate Italo Calvino metaphors (*The prism city*); Marta Calzolari delves into quantitative approaches that study contemporary urban reality according to measurable parameters concerning historical heritage (*The Measured City*); Veronica Balboni addresses histories, processes and substrates of the physical reality of the city, focusing on material stratifications (*The Stratified City*); Benedetta Caglioti, on the other hand, shifts attention to the various perceptual mechanisms and interpretive processes (*The city as a body*); Elena Dorato takes us among multiple utopian visions and dystopian scenarios (*The Imagined City*); Giorgia Sala finally

² <https://aisuinternational.org/citta-che-si-adattano-adaptive-cities/>, tomo 3, p. 4 (Andrea Longhi).

³ <https://aisuinternational.org/lecce-2002/>.

iconografiche, cartografiche e multimediali (*La città rappresentata*).

La lettura di un'opera così complessa non può che suscitare una serie di questioni, prima tra tutte quella che riguarda l'importanza della storia nel comprendere i fenomeni urbani. Cosa può farci capire, per esempio, la storia della città sull'attuale crisi climatica e come può contribuire a immaginare contesti inclusivi e consapevoli del valore del patrimonio urbano? Quale il ruolo delle donne in questo contesto, al di là del loro "senso per la città", fatto di curiosità, impegno, apertura, come afferma Elena Granata? Se gli scenari futuri ci parlano di processi di adattamento degli insediamenti per fronteggiare le grandi migrazioni climatiche nell'epoca del *global warming*, in quello che Gaia Vince definisce "secolo nomade", a cosa "serve" guardare al passato? Non è necessario scomodare un grande storico come Marc Bloch per ricordare come ciò che la storia ci tramanda prenda vita se riportato al nostro tempo; o che la storia non "serve", ma ci offre lo spazio per riflettere. Se non si salvano le città non si salva il pianeta: è il grido d'allarme lanciato recentemente da Giancarlo Consonni che colloca le città tra le più alte conquiste della storia umana. È proprio questo il punto: l'immediatezza dell'attualità, per nulla gratificante, non esclude la centralità della vicenda storica della città e della sua "bellezza civile".

introduces the complexity of the urban dimension by noting the importance of representations, iconographic, cartographic and multimedia (*The Represented City*).

Reading such a complex work cannot but raise a number of questions, first and foremost concerning the importance of history in understanding urban phenomena. What, for example, can the history of the city tell us about the current climate crisis and how can it contribute to imagining inclusive contexts that are aware of the value of urban heritage? What is the role of women in this context, beyond their "sense for the city," made up of curiosity, commitment, and openness, as Elena Granata states? If future scenarios tell us of processes of adaptation of settlements to cope with great climatic migrations in the age of global warming, in what Gaia Vince calls a "nomadic century," what is the "point" of looking to the past? It is not necessary to bother a great historian like Marc Bloch to remind us how what history passes on to us comes alive when related to our time; or that history does not "serve," but offers us the space to reflect. If you don't save the cities, you don't save the planet: this is the rallying cry recently launched by Giancarlo Consonni, who places cities among the highest achievements of human history. This is precisely the point: the immediacy of current events, by no means gratifying, does not exclude the centrality of the historical story of the city and its "civic beauty."

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD MUSEUM IN QINGDAO'S OLD TOWN: INTEGRATING HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND EDUCATION

YUE PAN

Abstract

Heritage, memory, and identity are fundamental components of urban history. This paper makes a case for the neighborhood museum concept by examining its implementation in Qingdao as a way to increase participation in heritage preservation. More extensive community engagement can evoke historical memory and identity, thereby stimulating the educational attributes of heritage, which offers new directions for conserving historic centers in other cities.

Keywords

Neighborhood museum, Heritage conservation, Cultural identity, Community engagement, Educational values.

Introduction

Qingdao, in the north of China, adjacent to Jiaozhou Bay, is an important cultural and economic center because of its unique location. And the city's long colonial history has constructed the feature urban heritage spaces which reflect the its historical past [Steinmetz 2009].

Nevertheless, the heritage in Qingdao's historic center is facing significant deterioration due to climate change and accelerated urbanization. Before 2015, the government mainly focused on conserving tangible heritage, specifically restoring deteriorated heritage. But this process had little effect because it ignored cultural heritage's important role in fostering cultural identity and promoting the sustainable development of historic cities. In recent years, the preservation of intangible cultural heritage has garnered increased attention. Heritage is more than just a relic of the past [Ashworth 2013], which is a testament to a city's history, culture, art, architecture and technological advancement. The conservation of them is about preserving the collective memory of the community [Rostoldo 2021], enabling us to comprehend the original urban history spaces. In a way, heritage has certain educational attributes. It is crucial in transmitting urban memories from generation to generation, instilling a sense of

cultural identity and fostering a profound connection with historical locations [Simbirtseva et al. 2020].

Consequently, Qingdao has altered its preservation policy, first implemented in the Dabaodao area. An effective initiative has been undertaken to convert the Liyuan buildings into a neighborhood museum [Wang 2005]. This program aims to organically combine heritage and cultural preservation while emphasizing the role of community in preserving the heritage and the heritage's educational value, which provides a novel paradigm of heritage preservation for other regions.

Cultural identity and heritage education

Cultural identity, defined as how one sees oneself in connection to a culturally unique social group, is a dynamic process that evolves due to exposure to new social, cultural, and historical contexts [Usborne 2014]. Shared history and standard memory are crucial components of cultural identity. Moreover, history can be conveyed through urban heritage, a remnant of the past that a society or city has chosen to preserve [Van Gorp 2007]. Therefore, heritage is a tangible manifestation of cultural identity, representing a society's shared experiences, values, and traditions [Howard 2008, 15]. By strengthening heritage conservation, city dwellers can develop a stronger connection to the history and culture [Bell 2022], whereby they can understand the value of heritage, its significance to the community, and its potential risks, promoting the collective responsibility to preserve. This represents a change from a traditional model of heritage conservation to a more open-minded model of heritage education. Qingdao is a historic city; the urban heritage in the ancient town distills its history, architecture, and social evolution, reflecting the city's cultural impact and long-term development. Preserving the heritage will retain the city's individuality [Leshchenko 2021].

Neighborhood Museums: New methodology

Museum is dedicated to collecting, preserving, interpreting, and exhibiting works of art, cultural artifacts, and scientific specimens for public education and research [Kreps 2008], which plays a vital role in modern heritage conservation. The etymology of the term "museum" can be traced back to its Greek counterpart, "mouseion," which means "Seat of the muses." In Latin, the word "museum" was derived to refer to a place of philosophical discussion in Roman times. It was not until the 15th century in Europe that the term "museum" reappeared to describe the Lorenzo de' Medici family collection in Florence. Since the 17th century, museums has been precisely identified as venues for showcasing collections of curiosities [Empereur 2002; Findlen 1989.; Sarton 1970]. However, in 1969, a three-day conference on the role of museums in the community was held at MUSE, the Bedford-Lincoln Museum in Brooklyn, New York. The conference primarily examined the lack of connection between museums and their

surrounding communities, which led to a broader definition of museums and a greater diversity of functions [Kinard 1985]. After that, Museums are no longer confined to their traditional functions of storage, research, conservation, and display; their functions of connecting communities and demonstrating cultural identity are more frequently mentioned [Simmons 2010].

From then on, the neighborhood museums concept emerged. This new type of museum concept engages the active participation of community residents and integrates exhibitions into local community life. Based on the division of urban living areas, the goal is to reflect the cultural characteristics of neighborhoods by displaying locally distinctive artifacts. This model could increase community involvement in museum institutions and serve the community, is sought-after [Gurian 2005; Ignard, Nighbert 1972.; Kinard 1985; Wills 2007].

Qingdao's old town, especially the Dabaodao area, as the centralized living area in the history, carries a lot of Qingdao's history and memories. The urban fabric in this area is laid out in a regular grid, with each neighborhood separated by four streets; the quadrilateral enclosure building form creates a distinct urban space, and each space has a distinct culture based on its history [Demgenski 2019; Warner 2011; Jin 2016]. All of these factors make it an ideal location for a neighborhood museum. The emergence of various cultural activities and exhibition venues has given rise to a diverse range of neighborhood museums, as observed in different neighborhood units [Zang 2018].

A blend of history and innovation

The neighborhood museum is an innovative approach to enhancing the heritage education value by blending traditional architecture with modern cultural elements. It preserves the originality of the built environment while incorporating contemporary exhibitions and educational facilities by revitalizing ancient buildings [Cantell 2005]. Historic centers are divided into different spaces based on the block and neighborhood, reflecting the historical contexts, including the traditional building materials, construction techniques, and architectural designs [Mo 2011]. Old buildings are converted into showroom spaces, which will incorporate modern elements such as interactive displays and multimedia installations to enhance the educational experience [Hammady 2016].

A vivid representation of the past

The mission of the neighborhood museum is to present history in a lively and interactive manner [Simbirtseva et al. 2020]. The public can learn more about the heritage by combining the local history, multi-modal presentations, and community engagement. The neighborhood museum uses interactive exhibits, historical demonstrations, and thematic performances to exhibit the history from early colonial influences to the city's industrialization transformation; each space offers a unique narrative that allows visitors to step into this history and achieve empathy with it.

Strengthening community participation

The neighborhood museum could be a cultural center hosting various educational activities, including seminars, lectures, and art workshops that cooperate by involving residents, organizations, and educational institutions [Moreno 2004]. These activities provide visitors with an interactive experience and allow local communities to participate in the planning and implementing the heritage preserve project, which fosters a sense of identity in preserving cultural heritage. Moreover, the museums also provide spaces for small community festivals, becoming a platform for sharing.

The case study of Qingdao

History of Qingdao's urban construction

Qingdao is a metropolis with a long history, and the origins can be traced back to the sixth century BCE; it was merely a village until the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries, and two colonial histories in the ushered in its urbanization.

German forces occupied Qingdao in 1897, developing the city into a major seaport to establish a commercial center and maritime military base in Asia¹. During this period, German engineers planned a modern street network and city layout, and also constructed many buildings in the Western style, profoundly influencing the formation of old town.

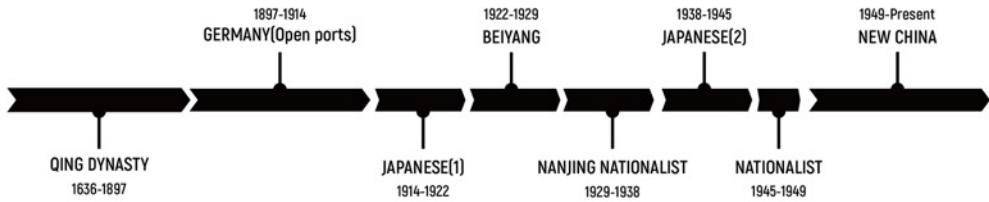
Unique Urban Space in Qingdao's Old Town

During the construction time, the German government developed a method of infrastructure priority in order to facilitate the management, i.e., planning and constructing the road system first and then attracting the residents and business people to purchase the land for construction; the most prominent of these initiatives are divided the European and Chinese districts and use different design concepts [Warner 2011].

The European settlement has mainly adopted Western urban planning concepts in order to make the Germans living here more adaptable, such as Howard's Garden Cities conceptualization and Camillo Sitte's urban design approach, which forms a 45° diagonally intersecting trapezoidal urban space [Jiang 2015].

On the other hand, to maximize the use of space, the Chinese residential area in the Dabaodao area adopts a strict grid-format road network to divide the neighborhood. Each area is an independent living space where people with similar backgrounds and

¹ The German government wanted to make Qingdao a model colonial city and planned it meticulously. Before the planning started, the land acquisition policy proposed by William Shan (1859-1926) made the German government own the most land, so the planner could plan Qingdao comprehensively. And it was because of the advanced planning concepts that following colonial governments followed the German planning so that the old city center of Qingdao did not suffer from a great deal of change and retained the urban space of the German period.



1: Yue Pan, the history timeline of Qingdao, 19/07/2023 [Qingdao City Archives].

cultural sensitivity live together, forming the unique neighborhood culture [Jin 2016]. Combining a grid pattern with the Chinese courtyard architecture concept results in a four-sided enclosed structure named a "Liyuan". One plot of land to build a complete Liyuan building, each building is a separate space.

Liyuan is a courtyard-style residential compound, mostly two-story buildings, with a few three- or four-story buildings [Demgenski 2019]. Based on Qingdao's topography, they have different heights and sizes, and the plan layout is almost according to the shape of Chinese characters [Wang 2011].

As the smallest unit of Qingdao's old city neighborhoods, Liyuan most built in the 20th century. It is estimated that there were more than 700 Liyuan structures in Qingdao in its heyday. However, many of them were demolished during city's renovation at the turn of the century to make spaces for new housing. Only approximately 300 Liyuan structures are left, most of which are in critical disrepair [Gao et al. 2022].

Therefore, Qingdao's heritage preservation efforts have received growing financial, legislative, and technical support since the Eighties [Liu 2011], which including the restoring architectural landscapes and urban planning that fall within this category. It also includes the recently implemented neighborhood museum renovation program. And the recent planning program named "Qingdao Historical and Cultural City Protection Plan (2020-2035)" defines the scope of protection, the heritage to preserve, and the contents.

The plan emphasizes the growth of cultural and leisure, tourism and vacation, commercial services, creative industries, and other sectors compatible with the historical legacy and cultural development. It includes specifics like the protection of historic neighborhoods, preserving the architectural texture of public buildings, independent courtyards and courtyards, and sharing the heritage space without altering the original spatial layout of the buildings. Notably, the historic neighborhoods will not only be protected as cultural landmarks but will also be accorded greater social importance [Qingdao et al. 2021].



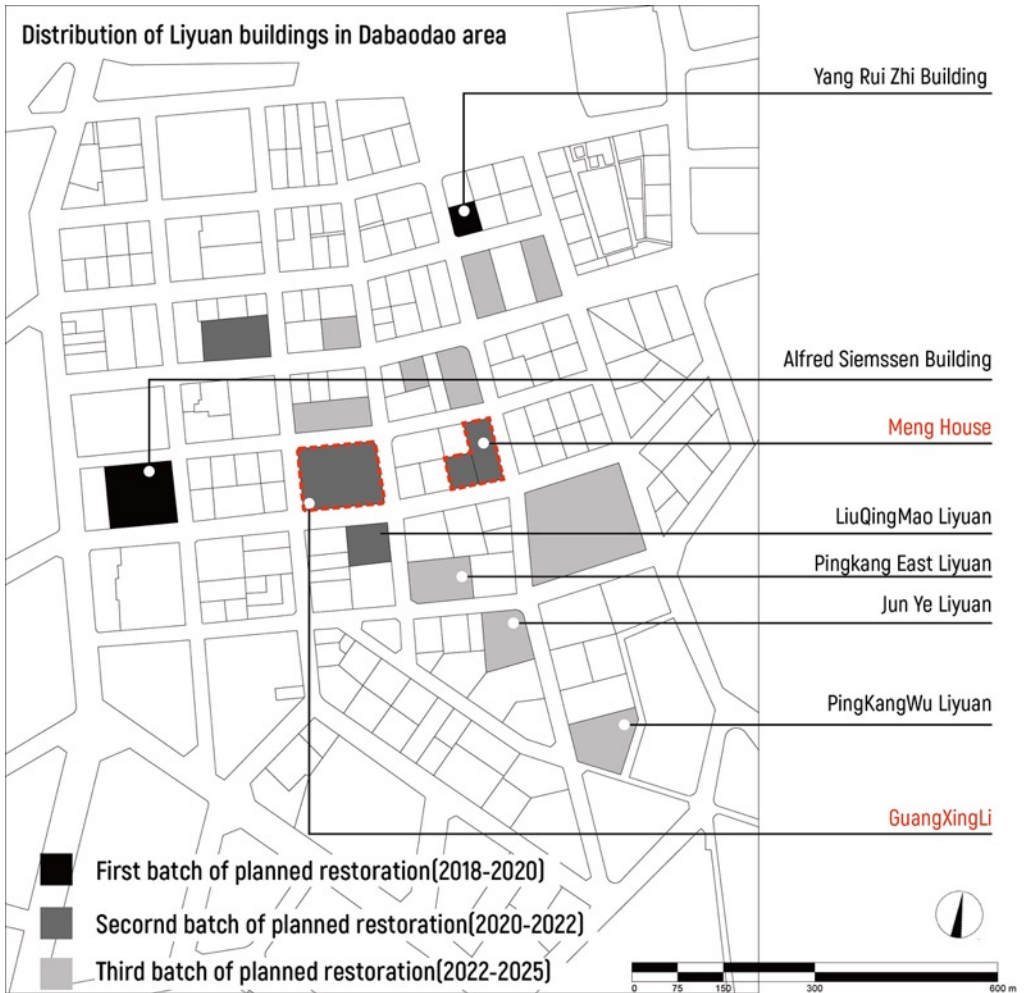
2: Stefan Tsingtauer, 1925 Aerial view of Qingdao Dabaodao, 04/02/2017 [Wikipedia].

The Dabaodao (Chinese residential) area has become the pilot area of this plan². This area changes the traditional single mode of heritage preservation; the spaces in Liyuan introduce new urban business forms such as cultural creation, history, education, and art, to create a “highly inclusive Neighborhood Museum”, forming a semi-open space of courtyards, and achieving the goal of sharing architectural space, which is a cultural space as well as an educational space. In the following section, the Guangxingli Museum and the Meng Museum will serve as case studies to explore the application of neighborhood museums in Qingdao's Liyuan area, highlighting their value and significance in urban culture and heritage education.

Cultural Spaces for Creative Commons

By opening the historic buildings to the public, the old city in Qingdao is moving from heritage conservation to heritage education [Rosenberg 2011]. The neighborhood museums provide a platform that contributes to preserving traditional crafts and promoting contemporary art activities.

² It is a pioneering region for the promotion of neighborhood museums because of its distinctive urban spaces, in which each Liyuan building is a neighborhood unit. https://news.qingdaonews.com/wap/2020-02/18/content_21276948.htm



3: Yue Pan, Distribution of Liyuan buildings in Dabaodao area, 27/07/2022 [Qingdao Natural Resources and Planning Bureau].

Guangxingli, constructed in 1897 with a total floor space of more than 4,000 square meters, is a prime example of Qingdao Liyuan. The spatial and structural design is distinctive because it reflects the Qingdao architectural tradition. The roof adopts a sloping roof structure and red brick, while the buildings are constructed with clear-water bricks and linked by a circular promenade of wooden structures, exemplifying the traditional Chinese architectural style. Another feature is its central courtyard, formerly the site of a bustling market and theatre [Zhang 2016; Zhang 2020; Li 2019]. The Government has initiated a reconstruction scheme that transforms Guangxingli into a creative and cultural museum to preserve its distinctive historical characteristics and revive the vibrant ambiance of bygone eras. By maintaining the integrity of the original architectural framework's integrity, diverse cultural and artistic activities have



4: Qingdao Industrial Design Innovation Centre, Guangxingli Before and After, 07/07/2022 [Qingdao Culture and Tourism Bureau].

been incorporated, encompassing retail, dining, recreational pursuits, exhibitions, and an amphitheater.

Each building section is a separate thematic heritage and artistic display area. For instance, the resource room contains an extensive collection of atlases, materials, and books about Qingdao history, allowing visitors to understand the city's history better; and the model room displays many Liyuan architectural models, illustrating the structural characteristics of this architectural style, and helping to popularize the culture of the Liyuan. Furthermore, the museum has a dedicated space that showcases Qingdao's distinctive folk dwellings, exhibiting the talents and skills of local non-genetic artists [Zhang 2020].

In summary, the construction of the Liyuan Museum will facilitate the integration of architectural heritage with cultural activities, increase the familiarity of visitors with the cultural heritage, foster a sense of cultural identity, and more effectively demonstrate the cultural and historical value of the Liyuan. These initiatives also generate economic and social impacts that will encourage the preservation of local heritage.



5: Youwen & Xiao xi, The practice of the Liyuan Museum, 20/02/2023 [Self-timer].

Educational Spaces for connecting history

Architecture is an essential medium for documenting a city's history [Albu 2021]. Liyuan buildings have recorded the critical trajectory of urban development and evolution, so preserving the building's history and cultural heritage is imperative [Chen 2010]. The neighborhood museums serve as a link between the past and the present. Through the museum, the public learns about the building's history, passes on historical values, and incorporates new elements to form a dialogue between the old and the new, which can expand the cultural vein's scope and depth in a continuous manner [Li 2013].

Meng House, another famous Liyuan building in the Dabaodao area, combined Chinese and Western architectural styles that serve as a historical record of the life and career of the renowned Chinese trader Meng Luochuan [Jin 2016]. In order to commemorate the deeds of their ancestors and to respond to the conservation policy, the descendants of the Meng Clan transformed their old house into the Cultural Museum and Art Gallery [Ming-Akashi 2020]. There are not only many atlases, materials, and books about Qingdao, but also Historical materials about Meng's business history that introduce the business environment of Qingdao at that time. At the same time, the restoration adheres to the principle of repairing the old as the old [Nie 2020], preserving the original architectural structure with its red water brick facade, round coupon-shaped windows, and red-tiled sloped roofs so that people can feel the charm of the Liyuan architecture. Thus, it has become a popular destination for visitors who want to learn more about Qingdao's past. Furthermore, integrating Qingdao's urban planning elements in some small facilities, such as the urban planning bookshelf showing the master plan of Qingdao's old city, makes the dull information more vivid to the public while fostering a sense of cultural identity.

Impacts and benefits

Heritage Preservation

The neighborhood museum in old city is crucial for preserving cultural heritage, which encourages the residents and visitors to participate in heritage conservation activities by emphasizing heritage education and community engagement. Particularly, under these measures, the residents become advocates for urban heritage preservation, promoting the possibility of sustainable heritage preservation.

In addition, this strategy addressed the problems posed by accelerated urbanization and modernization. By reusing existing buildings and combining historical heritage with modern facilities, old buildings will be preserved and given new functions.

Promote the cultural identity and tourism

The neighborhood museum also provides immersive heritage education experiences that promote a deeper understanding of heritage and history and strengthen the

connection to that history. These connections promote cultural identity and preserve the uniqueness of historic cities. Moreover, the features of the cities can contribute to the growth of tourism in historic cities, where tourists are no longer passive observers but active participants [García-Hernández 2017].

Replicability and generalizability

Developing a museum in the community is a paradigm that can be applied in other cities and other cultural settings [Brown 2017]. While specific historical and cultural elements may differ, the principles of community engagement, heritage education and regeneration of old buildings can be applied in other places. Municipalities around the globe can use the neighborhood Museum framework as a starting point for creating city-specific history education initiatives that contribute to long-term urban vitality.

Conclusion

The historic center is a heritage treasure trove that necessitates effective conservation strategies to address the risk caused by rapid urbanization. Current majority policies continue to focus primarily on physical conservation, while heritage education to enhance the cultural identity and sustainability is frequently neglected. This paper proposes an innovative model that combines traditional architecture with modern elements to construct the neighborhood-style museum, which not only preserves the urban heritage but also gives the heritage greater social significance.

In conclusion, Historic cities could preserve cultural traditions and offer a dynamic and enriching environment for the public by increasing community engagement, encouraging cultural identity, stimulating the educational attributes of heritage, and supporting long-term heritage preservation.

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