

From Historical Preservation to Renovation

— A Case Study of Renovation for Historic District of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall in the Foreign Concession Area, Hankou

1 Background

In the period of economic recovery after Second World War, a significant number of old cities were dismantled and new ones were built. However, it was found in a later period that though the buildings took on a new look, the original life scenes were destroyed and the city's characteristics disappeared. People began to realize that besides protecting antiquities and ancient scenes, preserving patches of historic districts are also very important. In 1976, UNESCO first clearly put forward the concept of preservation of historic districts in Nairobi Recommendation. In 2003 the Chinese government published "Preservation Criteria of Historic and Cultural Cities", which clearly classifies the historic districts as one of the three layers of preservation of historic cultural heritage. All of these promote preservation of historic districts in China. Internationally or domestically, from the original concept of historic district, to the preservation contents and measures, which were later continuously perfected, all emphasize that "in order to obtain best effect, the preservation of historic cities and districts should become integrated part of complete social and economic development, and should be taken into consideration on all layers for city planning and management plan". Thus, we emphasize cognizant establishment of the necessary combination of preservation and development, paying attention to external circumstances, and preserving the extension of original life scenes.

There are various exploration and discussion about current preservation work of historic district. In the beginning, the historic remainder was emphasized and the "museum pattern" preservation was put forward. This preservation pattern needs massive preservation fund, in general, is only useful for objects with high preservation value. But this preservation pattern isolates the original life condition from the preservation objects. For multitudinous excellence of historic preservation, this preservation pattern can not work. Internationally and domestically, the practices of city construction demonstrate that depending only on this idealistic preservation method of "blood transfusion pattern" usually does not result in good preservation effect, especially in an era of economic boom. In recent years, people are increasingly realizing that, in order to really preserve historic districts, more emphasis should be placed on value revitalization based on complete preservation of the original architecture and life scenes. Therefore, we advocate for complete historic preservation, which includes life pattern preservation, harmony between cultural heritage and natural environment, and harmonious acclimation to the needs and developments of modern life.

The Historic District of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall is located between Russian and France concession areas in Hankou Town of Wuhan City. With historical significance, it is a landmark to remind people about the glorious revolutionary tradition of CCP with a local cultural extension. As time passes by, the architectures and infrastructure suffered from physical decline. In addition, there is increasing discrepancy between the land value and the existing function. This paper studies the compilation of conservation plan for the Historic District of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall in Wuhan as an example, and explores the protection and renewal mode of the area. It argues that historic district planning shall focus on multi-requests such as preservation of historic remains, urban renewal and improvement of residential conditions. It also encourages the guidance of planning control by multi-reappearance, collage matching and virtual module and etc. The planning should achieve a balance between preservation of historical remains and urban regeneration, in order to achieve maximum benefits of the historical district.

2 Case introduction

The historic district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall is located between Russian and France concession areas in Hankou town of Wuhan city. It is a site of 36.7 hectares, located in the west of Zhongshan avenue, east of Yangjiang Avenue, south of Lanling Road, and north of Chezhan Road and Caier Road. It is a district with complete arrangement, suitable street dimension, and plentiful human and cultural treasures, reflecting the style and characteristics of modern time public activities of dwelling residents. This area contains all kinds of villas, new style lanes, alleys, boarding houses and public constructions of diversified styles and characteristics, such as former French consulate, former Russian consulate, Jifannuofu mansion, site of guild hall of US army youth in Hankou, and Tongxin lane. At the same time, as a former "Red Capital", Wuhan has plentiful revolutionary remains. In the historic district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall, there are many important representative historic sites, which exhibits glorious revolutionary traditions and inherits revolutionary context of Wuhan, for example, the site of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall, the site of Gongjinhui of Hubei, the site of office of Changjiang bureau of CCP.



Location Map

*From Conservation Plan for Historic
District of CCP's August Seventh
Conference Hall in Hankou Concession
Area*



**CCP's August Seventh
Conference Hall**



Former French Consulate



Luojiashan Blocks

From Conservation Plan for Historic District of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall in Hankou Concession Area

2.1 current condition and characteristics

Historic development path can be seen clearly: The historic district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall began in the period of concession areas. In the process of history development of Wuhan, this district experiences the ever-changing process of "city skirt-city center-old city core". In general, the location of this district is in the process of gradually centralization. The district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall, with its unique characteristics, space and constructions, records a past era's changes and the booms and slumps of history. The land function in this district is a mixture, mainly for residential dwellings and commercial developments.

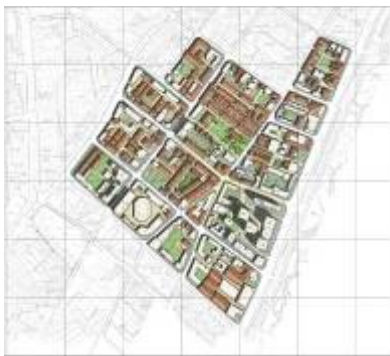
A whole site soaked in multiple cultures: In a district where there are plentiful revolutionary remains, historic value is prominent. All kinds of culture, such as the red culture, the culture of concession area, the culture of tea businesses, the culture of the residents, the culture of leisure and the culture of river beach, hybridize and embrace each other. After historical accumulation, the district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall, gradually becomes a diversified and splendid culture area with hybrid multi-culture characteristics.

Classic city pattern inherits from history: Classic district pattern of "grid net plus radiant" came into being during the time of concession area, and continues the district's pattern fairly well up to now. The patterns of "Baroque" style, the unique spatial textures, the interspaces of streets and lanes with suitable dimensions, plentiful arcades, space of "crossing street building", the splendid "fifth stand face" and the rich life scenes altogether form the characteristics this district.

The appearance of architectures never fades with time: In this district, there remain much excellent architecture of recent times and this district can be described as an encyclopedia of modern architectures. These chic architectures, with a variety of styles, are subject to the cultural influences of the West; however Wuhan regional characteristics are also integrated in the architectural style, forming a unique architectural culture in the former concession district in Hankou, which possesses strong regional characteristics and features of the times.

2.2 Planning practice

According to the principle of "authenticity, integrity and sustainability", we emphasize on preserving the authenticity of true historic original matters in this district as well as the overall neighborhood pattern and the environment appearance, protecting the integrity of tangible material as well as the cultural heritage and intangible nonmaterial cultural heritage by means of perfecting neighborhood function, improving infrastructure, increasing environment quality, in order to achieve harmonious sustainable development of social, economic, and environmental in this neighborhood. Relying on good historic and cultural resources of current condition, we integrate regional functions, strengthening regulation and updating the historical and cultural environment, in order to instill the old neighborhoods with new vitality and modern ways of life. In the end, our aim is to build a historic district with modern ways of life, which has red tourism themes, combining with multiple functions, such as featured businesses, entertainment, offices and noble residence.



General layout plan



Planning aerial view

From Conservation Plan for Historic District of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall in Hankou Concession Area

3 Multiple reappearance: dealing with cultural heritage of city

Cultural heritage should have carriers, as a true carrier, the material remains should be in good shape in order to support the cultural heritage. Some localities were famous in history, but their original physical forms have degenerated. Thus in some localities, history culture is seen as a cash cow, blind rehabilitation and frauds prevail. This kind of concocted historic remains, only for the purpose of profit, may be very popular for some time, but these man-made sights can not last long, and will be punished eventually. This so-called historic preservation without original historic remains cuts off the historical context, and completely departs from historic preservation purposes. It is not good for the preservation of historic neighborhoods, and is not accepted by the masses. Well-known sites in history without real remains will vanish very soon. This is not the task of protection work today. The protection of

intangible cultural heritage, which attracts great attention in recent years, is also faced with such a predicament and there is a heritage problem. Real heritage without fakes is absolutely a necessity. By means of a combination of all kinds of cultural elements and value classification, the district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall takes multiple reappearance measure of intervals between void and reality, corresponding to the existing conditions. At the same time, combined with cultural tourism map, we implement the integrity protection, coping with cultural heritage, and realizing the value reappearance.

3.1 Value evaluation with combination of dynamic and static

Usually, in the beginning of preservation planning of historical district, the first job is to evaluate the real value of the cultural heritage. Through value classification, correspondingly, we then take different protection strategies. Currently, the focus of evaluation is usually on material cultural heritage, which exists in a "static" way. The evaluations for intangible cultural heritage, which exists in "dynamic" way, are rarer.

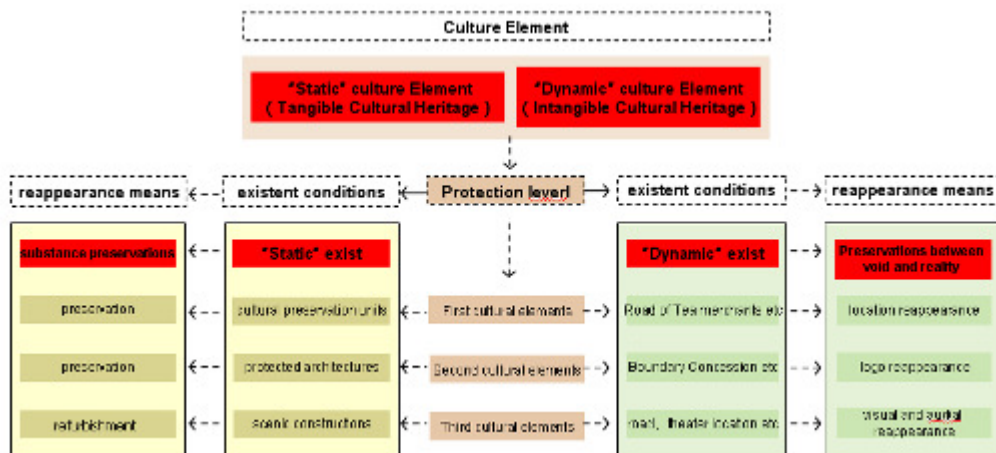
In the historic district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall, there are rich historical and cultural resources. There exist not only a large number of cultural protection units and outstanding historical buildings, which are historic remains in the forms of material substances, but also a large number of non-material cultural heritages. For some of those, the substance remains have disappeared, for others there have been no adhered substance remains, but its original meanings are still deeply rooted in people's mind. The latter also has high cultural value, and is precious historical cultural resources of this district. The planning began with exploitation of historical information, through sorting out multiple cultures, which existed in this in historical district, such as Red Culture, concession area culture, tea business culture, dwelling culture, leisure culture, river beach culture, collectively covered all kinds of cultural elements of tangible or intangible, material or substance. These cultural elements may be a building, but it may also be just a story or a legend of history. They may be at present or in the past. All kinds of cultural elements should be overlaid in order to analyze and comprehensively evaluate from many aspects, such as location, age, size, facilities level, condition, degree of importance, degree of uniqueness, lever of art and degree of popularity, in order to establish the three levels of cultural value.

3.2 Reappearance measure with interval between void and reality

Separated value evaluation system correspondingly brings differences of subsequent protection measures. Historical districts are preserved and updated by many means, such as designation of preservation scope, construction control zone and environmental coordination zone to strengthen protective control for material remains, and establishment of

corresponding strategies in protection, repair, maintenance, improvement, renovation and regulation. But for "non-material cultural heritage", the preservation is limited only to evaluation, lacking substantial means and operability is not strong.

The historic district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall corresponds with the "three levels of cultural elements", which are treated, according to their existent conditions, by protective measures and reappearance means with intervals of void and reality. Therefore, for the "static" cultural elements, of which the substance exists, different measures are taken for cultural preservation units, protected architectures and scenic constructions according to corresponding regulations, substance preservations are implemented, for example, the site of CCP's August Seventh conference hall. For the "dynamic" cultural elements, of which the substance does not exist or only partly exists, by means of materialization or solidification of certain amount of public cultural space, adoption of multiple reappearance methods of "location reappearance", "logo reappearance", "visual and audio reappearance", location feelings are created and traces of historical information can be perceived. Therefore, the "location reappearance" is not a fake antique, but a means to integrate elements of the original site, such as "ruins of broken tile" or "a few words", and to reproduce the original feelings and scenes. "Logo reappearance" is to reproduce the original constructions by arrangement of sculptures, land settings, logos and etc. "Visual and audile reappearance" is to reproduce by video, music, letter and other media means.



Multi-reproduction technology

From Conservation Plan for Historic District of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall in Hankou Concession Area

3.3 Cultural map with distinctive characteristics

As a good media means, culture map of urban is very important. It can not only be a detailed guide map of the city culture for displaying the result of culture protection and information of culture construction, but can also be an important analytical tool for reflecting the historical progress of urban civilization, guiding the development of the city's cultures and

promoting the cultural planning and construction of urban space.

Based on cultural evaluation combining with reappearance means, the planning team creates five distinctive tours, including red revolution travel, footprint travel of historical celebrities, featured travel of concession remains, characteristics travel of living place and leisure culture travel of marshland. These routes integrate these scattered cultural elements and the general feature of the block, and sketch out a map of the historic district of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall in parallel to the geographic map. On the one hand, it gives the full social benefits of historic protection, so that people can perceive history, experience the culture and heritage memory; on the other hand it can also give the full economic benefits of historic protection by integrating historic protection and travel, so that people can realize that historic protection is not an economic burden but a wealth and therefore more effectively carry out the protection work.

4 Collage matching: to realize historical renewal of the area

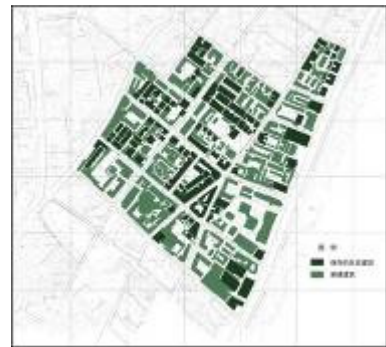
Through interpreting and analyzing images of historical maps and diagrams, we study the street facade texture in terms of street space, street blocks, and the fifth façade, in order to summarize the relevant history of neighborhood development. On this basis, we organically update the street blocks by combing and replacing, balancing the "continuity" and "collage" of block style, in order to achieve the organic integration of "history" and "real life".

4.1 District appearance with coexistence of multiplex elements

The reconstruction of old town is constantly affected by social background, technical regulations, design techniques and other aspects, forming a cross-section at different times under the fabric and style features of the building,



1933 urban fabric



2010 urban fabric

showing a "Coexistence," the collage of features, unique space shapes and textures of the city block styles. The pattern of "August 7" conference monument area of the city formed in the concession period, as time passed by, though in a market economy under the impact of the changing fabric of neighborhoods, there have been some high-rise buildings, but the existing road grid, block texture, and other well-preserved historic buildings continue to preserve the historical pattern and block style. Through the "figure analysis" of space texture in 1933 compared with 2010, we can see the texture development of the historical sites mainly for the purpose of increased capacity, by way of increasing both density and vertical height.

Our plan follow the special patters of the Luoja Hill neighborhoods, Tongxingli neighborhoods and Lan Ling Village neighborhood prototypes of urban fabric, through weaving texture, and the merging and integration of regional functions, continue to preserve the continuation of the historical block texture, and the formation of ordered, unique neighborhoods. We maintain the high density of horizontal layout, to ensure the integrity of street block space. We implement building height control based on the upper-level planning requirements. To ensure the integrity of street block space, we make the following planning regulations on the enclosed block along the street side: the width of the roadway leading to the internal block should not be more than the width of adjacent streets; roadway layout can be combined with shops to form Guojielou; we ensure that part of the roadway maintain appropriate width and height to serve as appropriate channels during fire emergencies. We control the vertical height of the street based on several sub-levels to enrich Jiekuo space. Finally, we protect and extend the historical morphological characteristics, namely the “fifth elevation”, we plan to transform the part of the original roof slopes, requiring roofs of new buildings be coordinated with the historical characters and encourage the use of green roofs and roof terrace, in order to improve the utilization of the roof space. By strengthening the corner tower building design, we encourage the formation of a sequential, vibrant and historic district skyline.

4.2 Road system with historic continue

We encourage the continuation of the existing grid pattern of radial roads, as combined with road traffic and surrounding land features, to form a unique transportation system. Placing public transportation as the dominant, combined with the road network system planning, and bus priority road sections, we continue to improve the efficiency of public transport access and environmental quality. Around the historic district and the street space, we set bicycle tour routes, and add additional bike lanes according to the road sections, in order to build a low-carbon green slow traffic environment. We planned new public bicycle parking points, according to the combination of public transportation, high-density public spaces and buildings, major tourist attractions, parking lots, in order to maximize a seamless transfer experience and to create a comfortable and convenient environment for slow traffic. We effectively organizing parking space, as driven by parking demand management methods, take appropriate measures for different situations, aiming at maximizing the resolution of the regional shortage of public parking configuration. We place hourly limits on road parking in order to effectively manage the organization; we also encourage underground parking, and separate parking building, etc. on new city blocks to solve the parking problem.

As a continuation of the historical characteristics of open public street, we continue to retain characteristics of the arcade and Guojielou space, to create traditional-style sidewalk,

to adjust the road section in order to improve the pedestrian space system. Improve the walking system: In order to improve the status quo walking trails of intermittent segments and a variety of widths, we adjust the road cross-section, to form a smooth and comfortable foot building systems. Limited hour Pedestrian Street: According to historical and important sites, we set pedestrian-only time limit on some roads, to create a comfortable neighborhood environment, in order to increase public roadway, street space, and the level of openness in order to continue the history of public open space, and to preserve the historical street life styles. Finally we combine public space to create a number of public green tunnels with unique characteristics.



Road system



Street system



Pedestrian system

4.3 Green land layout according to circumstances

Unlike the new city's green development planning process, our plan did not copy the construction of new city's open space to the old town. According to new city's planning process, the expansion of green or open space area will have a negative impact on the historic character of the protected areas. In order to maintain the style of the old town, we are planning to utilize green building strategy, and adapt it to local conditions, to insert green space wherever possible and to focus on improving the quality of green space and to enhance the green cover and three-dimensional green volume on the basis of the status quo environmental standards. One of our main considerations is to utilize "vertical greening index" and convert green roofs or walls into this index. The green indicators should not be less than the status quo, and we should maximize the rate and balance it in the region, but not necessarily to achieve the target rate in conventional planning. Our plan encourages the conversion of private green space into public open green space, the formation of neighborhood middle-of-the-street parks. Combined with the characteristics of historical streets, we create public green tunnels through the detailed design of road sections for planting trees to provide space to improve the road greening systems.

In order to improve the status quo conditions of high-density built-up, cramped open space, inadequate fire evacuation routes and other small defects, we take into account the special requirements of historical sites, in accordance with the prevention-oriented approach, we build a disaster prevention system of three horizontal lines and multiple points. We set

three main horizontal evacuation routes utilizing the combination of marshland park gate, while combining local conditions of existing air defense facilities, green street, large public spaces (such as Hezuo Road Stadium) into the complete system of disaster prevention, in order to provide sufficient space for and access to disaster hedge.

5 Virtual module: to guide renewal of urban's function

Our plan pays full respect to history; continues to preserve the historical urban fabric, and strengthens the protection of historic buildings, highlighting local urban culture, and strengthens the dialogue between the history and the future. We improve infrastructure, transport accessibility, and create a people-oriented public space, in order to enhance the overall vitality of historic sites. Through the compound land use, urban functions optimized to drive the old city's economic revival; we anticipate achieving urban and social prosperity. Through the establishment of "virtual modules", our plan studied modes of urban revitalization. On the basis of meeting the upper-level control planning requirements and with due respect to the host status of land property rights, and cadastral land ownership breakdown, we establish "plot" as the basic unit of the planning system, in order to encourage sustainable urban revitalization through the mixed land use.

5.1 Land partition with respect for property right

Through analysis of the "August 7 conference" historical site from diverse perspectives including land use, building type, style, and many other historical and cultural aspects, it is summarized as virtual block model. The neighborhoods are enclosed by urban roads, at the scale of 300 * 150 meters, a total area of 4.5 hectares. It is composed of 25 different units of land ownership; there are cultural protection units, outstanding historic buildings, historic buildings, primary schools and other public facilities, and multi-storey residential and high-rise residential buildings as well. Some blocks are complete while others are split, some are interlocking with each other. Our plan is in accordance with principle of preserving historical landscape while paying due respect to land ownership, in order to determine the sub-plot with cadastral ownership, and to further establish "plot" as a unit of the planning system.

In the city central area, the city features multi-composite functions, high land values, dense compact urban fabric, and high-density buildings; it also possesses a higher index of land fragmentation, which features a complex ownership history of cadastral lots, and a combination of plots of different size scales. Meanwhile the urban revitalization model of historical sites is "interwoven", different from the "high-rise" model of the newly integrated urban area. Land division must meet the requirements of preserving full historical styles and atmosphere, and to make sure a certain block size is in accordance with a certain historical context and atmosphere of consideration. Planning and management can be flexibly split and combined, provided it's in line with the requirements of land. Specifically, there are the


"multiple deposit," "lump-sum"," Merging "and other modes. In sum, we have to utilize different methods to deal with the demolition and merging of blocks, in accordance with the planning permission and the site specifics, in order to achieve a variety of possibilities.

5.2 Renovation mode with multiplex forms

"Multiple deposits" mode: Taking overall control of the local updates. It is used for a plot with different units of land ownership, when it is difficult to achieve recent integration, and the blocks in the plot have their own requirements of renovation, such as in situ reconstruction, adding layers, and the installation of elevators. In addition to the planning and management within in its own case, the program must be placed for consideration in the real land plot. As the land area is small, construction-intensive, it is best that the proposed plan's impact to the surrounding environment be less than its predecessor.

"Lump-sum" model: the overall control of the whole update. It is best suited for plots of both single units of land ownership and different property units, when the entire block has the power and possibilities of overall renovation. The recommended way is to update the whole plot, but in accordance with the original architectural style, and the planning indicators are not to exceed its original target.

"Merging" model: taking the overall control of cross-updates. It is best suited for cultural protection units, outstanding historic buildings, and the surrounding land or public facilities around historic buildings (such as primary schools, municipal facilities). The renovation of such sites should first take into consideration the requirements of public utilities and historical preservation, then combine smaller land parcels where possible.

Modes	Reality	Plan
"Multiple deposits"		
"Lump-sum"		
"Merging"		

From Conservation Plan for Historic District of CCP's August Seventh Conference Hall in Hankou Concession Area

5.3 Index system with strong implement property

In accordance with the principle of "considering property rights, progressive updating, style continuation, enabling management", the 14 blocks are divided into 57 plots. The scale of plots of 0.3-2.0 hectares of land as the basic unit, is based on the cadastral land ownership lines, existing compound (such as sharing a common channel), the existing boundaries of public facilities (such as primary schools, kindergartens, municipal facilities), and the historical architectural style. In principle, each block (enclosed urban roads) is divided into 3-10 plots, because land units of such scales are small enough to carry out the content guidelines of the regulatory control, and is able to be combined with cadastral ownership information to enable the better operational planning. To meet the needs of the construction of basic functions such as strip malls, small multi-family residential, and nursery, the minimum land area is generally less than 0.3 hectares. In order to prevent the negative impacts of large-scale development, such as less diversity on façade styles, land area is generally not greater than 2 hectares.

On the premise of meeting the upper-level control plan, and conforming to the historical characteristics of urban land complex diversity, we set compatibility standards by ways of creating an index on mixed-use land. To determine indicators on the plot, there are four different methods: "general control law, case law, the average index method and analogy method." In order to determine specific indicators, the decision should be based on the actual situation, while it may also adopt various methods to conform with each other. Because the same indicators can be drawn from a variety of combinations of different modes of building layout, the plan needs to be combined with other technical indicators, in order to guide the shape of common space to ensure that public interest and the continuity of the urban landscape is preserved.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, we suggest that the protection and renewal process of historic district planning shall focus on the inheritance of historical context, deepening of the meaning of the place, positive response to the surrounding changes, as well as the proper handling of the contradictions of protection and development, effectiveness and environment. We also suggest that making better living condition for people by taking more pragmatic attitude in planning should be encouraged, thereby realizing real transition from historical preservation to renovation.

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