

Built heritage as source of world city identity

The case of Shanghai

Introduction

The ample international attention to world city matters in the recent years is reflected in the intensity of research focusing in the field, both linked with academia (Friedmann 1982, 1986; Sassen, 1991; Hill and Kim, 2000; Yueng and Lo, 1995; Lo and Marcotullio, 2000) and undertaken by private sector practice (management and property consultants, real estate multinationals, human resources firms, expatriates' associations, and the media). As a consequence, a substantial number of checklists that describe and compare the commonalities and particularities of such cities circulate. In most of these rankings, New York, London and Tokyo stand out as the metropolises that have achieved "global status": they are centres of control, exchange and emanation of capital in the interlinked world economy; they agglomerate world-reaching corporate decision making; they concentrate a formidable number of highly skilled professionals; they possess a robust telecommunications infrastructure; and they are somehow unavoidable transport hubs.

Next to the elite, there are a number of urban territories which compete to attract foreign direct investment as a principal mean of climbing the world city ladder. These cities are preparing themselves with no scarcity of dedication, creating a wide spectrum of enabling, market-oriented pre-conditions and projecting unique traits that contribute to build a recognisable urban brand.

Is there room for more world cities? The world city paradigm does not exclude future entrants. Friedmann (2000) acknowledges the existence of a severe competition to ascend in rank; and Sassen (1991) identifies these contenders as major cities in the developing world. Judging from their population size, cities such as Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Mumbai, Lagos or Shanghai could be on the merit list. Yueng and Lo (1995) indicate that world cities are not simply considered by its demographic weight, but importantly by the number of functions that they perform in the global economy.

As China continues to gain momentum towards becoming a key contributor to the world economy, it is not unreasonable to think that the likelihood of one of its hubs becoming a world city is above the average. This likelihood was given a strong support when, at the 14th CCP congress in 1992, the central government formulated a strategy to "seize the opportunity of development and opening of Shanghai Pudong, and to build Shanghai as the dragon head and one of international economic, finance, and trade center, so as to drive the growth of the Yangtze River Delta and in turn the take-off of the whole economy of the Basin."

Stimulated by this state drive over the last decade, Shanghai has experienced urban growth of unprecedented speed and scale. Rose (1998) has pointed out that Shanghai stands at the interface of the world economy and the Chinese nation state. As other regional and global cities have done in the past, Shanghai, its municipal and national authorities, are determined to set the instruments to make possible an evolution from the city's current role of gateway and manufacturing centre towards one in which the tertiary sector has a greater weight.

Several authors (notably Castells, 1996; Camagni 2002) link the health of a post-industrial economy to innovation, knowledge factors, and immaterial elements linked to culture, such as taste and creativity. Private sector city evaluation considers the living environment

(understood as a city's social and natural fabric) amongst the major factors that determine a city's magnetism. These observations have a direct effect on direction and destiny of cross-border investment; but they do also form opinion in the mobile human capital. If paramount importance should be given to persons and knowledge in the post-industrial economy, then factors related to ensuring quality of life, which in turn enables human capital to flourish, are fundamental for the sustainability of a world city.

Could a candidate world city continue to be so if its environment is severely depredated, in a manner that it threatens the health of its inhabitants? Would it be able to attract and retain the same human capital if its built environment is nondescript and impersonal? Common sense makes it difficult to give an affirmative answer to these questions. Leading cities have undoubtedly achieved economic strength, but they do also project unique environmental and cultural qualities that differentiate them.

Focusing on Shanghai's efforts towards becoming a world city, this paper will:

- Recount definitions, components and conditions that are considered important in a world city formation process
- Introduce the urban assets framework as a tool to holistically look at how cities can offer both development-enabling conditions and quality of life to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and human capital
- Narrate Shanghai's actions relevant to social / cultural assets, exemplified by the city's urban heritage conservation programme

What is a world city?

In 1915, Patrick Geddes (cited by Ng and Hills, 2003) set a precedent for world city thinking, noting then how a new type of city was "expanding to new and vaster groups of conurbations." In 1966 Sir Peter Hall added a functional level to the notion of world cities: they act as centres of political power at national and international levels, nodes of trade, finance and communication, and nucleus in culture and education. (Clark 1996)

The spine of the current academic world city debate is anchored in the work of Friedmann (Friedman and Wolff, 1986) and Sassen (1991). In Friedmann and Wolff's influential World City Hypothesis,

- World cities' employment structure is related to their integration with the world economy
- World cities are used by international capital as base points in spatial organisation of products and markets; these linkages result in hierarchical urban networks
- World cities' global control functions can be measured by the presence of transnational corporations
- They concentrate and accumulate international capital
- They are destination for domestic and international migrants
- They are subject to spatial and class polarisation
- Their growth generates social costs sometimes exceeding the state's fiscal capacity

Sassen (1991), in her study of New York, London and Tokyo, concludes that world cities function in the following ways:

- As highly concentrated command points in the organisation of the world economy
- As key locations for finance and business services which have replaced manufacturing as the leading economic sectors
- As sites of production including the production of innovations, in these leading industries
- As markets for the innovations produced

Hill and Kim (2000) summarise the world city argument in six theses:

- World cities provide the infrastructure that enables corporations to control their global operations.
- Clustering of international finance and business services drive world city growth
- These services replace manufacturing as the determinant of economic growth and social patterning, creating a sharp increase in occupation and income polarisation
- There is a new hierarchy of cities articulating functions of national, regional and global stature
- The world city is the domain of a trans-national capitalist class and their cosmopolitan culture and consumerist ideology
- World cities integrate with each other and resemble and relate to each other more so than with other areas in their own nation-state

These seminal writings have exposed how world cities *are*. In parallel, the work of a number of authors theorises on what candidate cities could *do* in their pathway to attaining world city status. In this regard, Ng and Hills (2003) reproduce Eaton's (1999) recipe for nurturing global capitalism:

- Foster a market-based, transparent financial system that encourages the formation of risk capital
- Provide financial and tax incentives to those responsible for the creation of new wealth
- Restrict government actors to only those necessary for the efficient functioning of open markets
- Reduce protective trade barriers
- Enact a clear rule of law that protects investment
- Support innovation
- Set an education system that creates a stream of innovative scientists and a literate work force

Camagni (2002) denotes that territories compete with one another to attract external investment and in defining a productive role for themselves within the international division of labour. These territories can be weak or strong depending on how they score on:

- Competitiveness of economic fabric
- Internal/external accessibility
- Quality of the human environment factors
- Internal synergy
- Learning capability

These checklists highlight the importance of setting the right climate for financial and business services activities to thrive, both for established world cities and for cities in the developing world that are aspiring to amplify their role in the global arena. In the case of the latter type, literature review shows a more acute emphasis on human capital and points out that growing cities are in need to amass a stream of global know-how. Global financial apparatus' control functions are still depending on the human factor, and it's not always

possible to make accurate decisions from a 9-hour time difference zone. Since attaining a critical mass of talent requires a considerable amount of time, cities like Shanghai rely early on their world city formation process on a contingent of imported knowledge, both from foreign origin and from the Chinese diaspora in Shanghai's case. This know-how will blend with and cross-inform local skill, setting the foundation for the development of the city's human capital.

World cities *per se* attract and are able to retain qualified professionals. Candidate world cities broadcast their career / life style attributes in order to appeal to the "well-educated, socially mobile...who work in organisations and institutions which sustain world city functions" (Clark, 1996). Ng and Hills (2003) relate quality of life issues to the concept of sustainable development, and propose a model which emphasizes the integration of economic, social and environmental concerns.

Urban assets

Urban quality of life is linked to how a city makes use of its urban assets. In this text, urban assets intend to signify the social / cultural, environmental / natural and economical / procedural elements which cities have available for interplay.

Urban assets refer not only to the description of pillars of sustainability that must be considered in an integrated fashion. The concept of "telescoping" (Marcotullio et al, 2003), the overlapping of material conditions that affect daily life, informs the urban assets framework as its elements are conceived as "living" factors that affect one another instantly and continually and hence need to be looked at simultaneously.

For growing cities in the developing world, a balanced, integrated and simultaneous interplay of urban assets will result in urban quality of life; this in turn will positively impact the city's competitiveness in attracting investment and human capital, components needed in constructing its pathway to becoming a world city.

The economical / procedural elements that may enable an urban system to manoeuvre in the world city protocol may include a determined and empowered governance system; an encouraging and stabilised market condition; incentives to attract FDI; decentralisation of decision-making from the nation-state; an acceptable degree of business transparency; infrastructure that grants physical and non-physical accessibility and mobility; and an emphasis on innovation and technological development. Social / cultural assets relate to, *inter alia*, inhabitant's education resources; their integration in a harmonious community; the access to arts and cultural events; the city's appreciation for the history and knowledge rooted in the built environment; an urban identity whose unique character enriches human experience and is distinct from other places; the health conditions vis-à-vis the quality of the environment and the existence and quality of hospitals and remedy facilities; access to housing; the opportunities of entertainment, recreation and sports, and the access to consumer goods. Environmental / natural assets include natural and man-induced elements such as the availability of land, the quality of the air inhabitants breathe; the provision of water; waste treatment strategies and systems; the city's natural features; the qualities of its landscape and the provision and care of urban flora; species; climate; and the noise resulting from human activity.

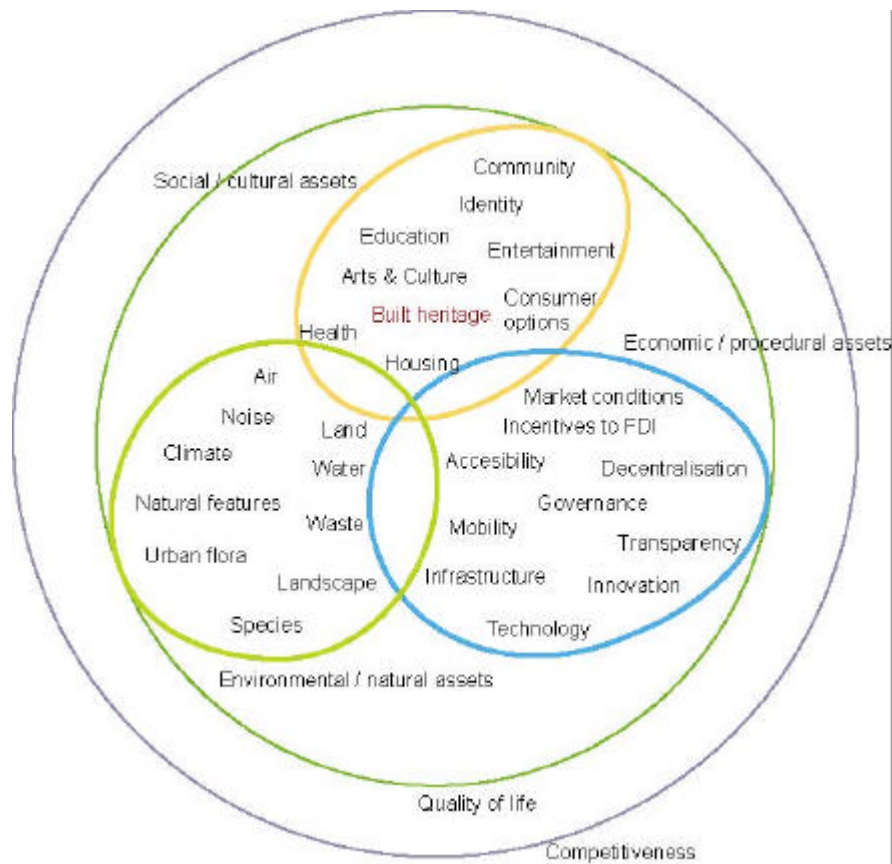


Figure 1. Interplay of Urban Assets¹

The importance of social and environmental issues in world city making is highlighted by both academics and consultants. The emergence of the Urban Ecosystem (Marcotullio et al, 2003) concept, which proposes an inclusive framework of social and natural sciences, is an example of this. Marcotullio and Piracha (2003) call attention to the importance of cultural features in urban environments, as “cities have many cultural perspectives and artefacts and house a huge range of significant human social, cultural and economic activities.” Simmie (2001) points out that heritage and innovation can be linked as one factor promoting the international image of a city. Ng and Hills (2003) have remarked that “built heritage should be preserved while serving the needs of modern economic life and modern lifestyles.”

International real estate consultants Jones Lang Lasalle indicate that the quality of the urban environment will become a more important determinant of city competitiveness. The firm’s study *Winning Cities* (2002) concludes that cities will be making substantial efforts to improve their urban landscapes and their cultural and entertainment offer, recognising that they are key ingredients to retain and attract footloose well-educated knowledge workers, as well as stimulating tourism.

Human resources consultancies have assessed a city’s attractiveness in the eyes of mobile human capital (in other words, the career opportunities and the quality of life that cities can offer) in a series of comparative studies. A representative example is Mercer’s, a human resources consultancy, which computes political, economic and consumer indicators alongside with health / environmental issues such as air pollution and recreation issues related to the vibrancy of the cultural landscape. In this world-wide list, the Asian cities that rank in the *Top 50* are Singapore, Tokyo, Yokohama, Kobe and Osaka.

Media rankings use the term *urban experience* to define the perception that end users have of a city. In elaborating its list of Asia's best cities (Figure 2), Asia Week (2000) has looked also at economic and consumer factors, but concurs in its evaluation that air pollution and government's expenditure in education and culture are foremost factors.

Indicators	Tokyo (1)	Singapore (3)	Hong Kong (6)	Shanghai (15)
Overall score (max. 100)	73	72	70	57
Average income US\$	37,661	36,436	20,832	5,542
Education spending per cap /\$	826	485	891	408
Unemployment rate %	4.6	3.3	5	4.6
Ratio of house price to income	21	17	24	21
Hospital beds per 1000 people	12	3	4.9	5.5
Pollution - dust in air (μ/m^3)	4	34	85	168
Vehicles per km of city road	248	219	274	101
Criminal cases per 10,000	224	100	110	21
TV sets per 1,000 people	226	385	431	433
Inflation %	-0.4	1.6	-2.7	0.3
GDP growth %	1.5	10.2	10.8	10.4
Average class size (primary school)	29	25	33	—
Life expectancy	77	77	79	71
Av. commute time (min)	56	30	30	40
Phones per 1,000 people	502	347	700	286
Mobiles per 1,000	374	377	575	155
Internet use per 1,000	132	473	248	3

Table 1.
Asia's Best Cities
Source: Asia Week, 2000

Shanghai

Shanghai is located in a flat area in the alluvial plain of the Yangtze River Delta. The city has a total area of 6,340 square kilometers, 0.06 percent of China's total territory. Shanghai extends about 120 kilometres in north and south and nearly 100 kilometres in east and west. The city's 19 districts cover a total area of 5,299 square kilometres and its only county has an area of 1,041 square kilometres. Shanghai has three islands under its jurisdiction, Chongming, Changxing and Hengsha. Its population (permanent residents) is 13.4 million, representing 1% of China's total. In 2003, the average population density was 2,116 people per square kilometre. Shanghai has a northern subtropical maritime monsoon climate. In 2002, the average annual temperature was 17.8 degrees Celsius and the annual rainfall 1,427.9 millimetres.

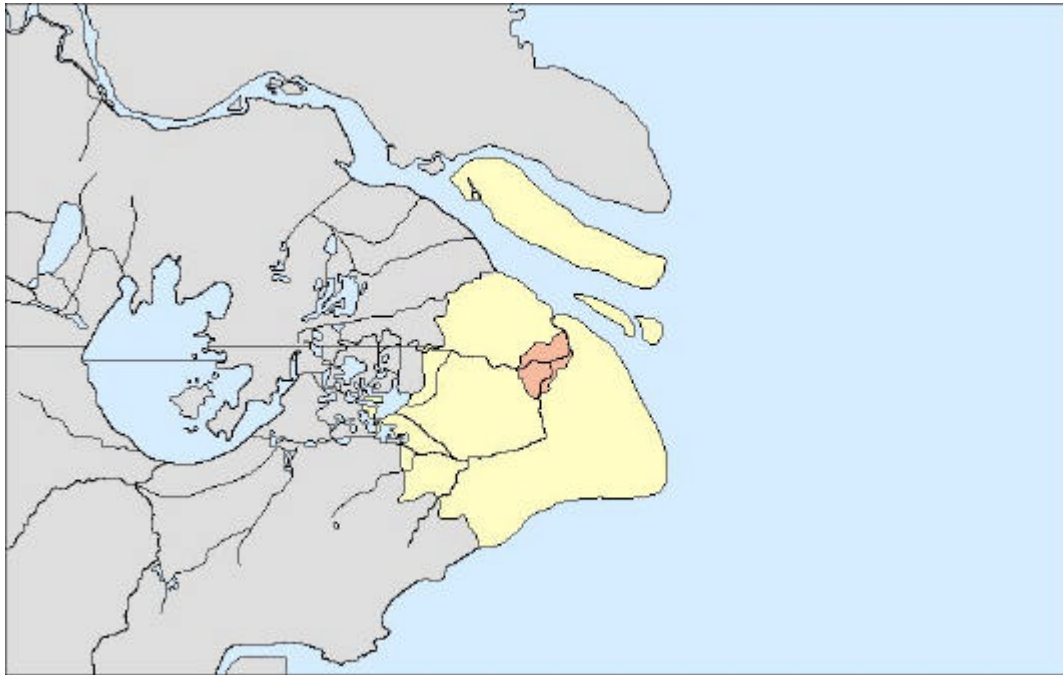


Figure 2.
Shanghai region



Figure 3.
Shanghai Districts

Shanghai opened to foreign trade after the Opium War in 1843. In the colonial economy, the city served as a trade control point and administrative centre, channelling foreign products and local agricultural produce and mineral materials. The opening of the Shanghai-Hanzhou

railway in 1905 and the Shanghai-Nanjing in 1908 gave the city an unrivalled competitive edge in the region and brought unprecedented trade prosperity. The population reached 1 million by 1880 and almost four million by 1935. By 1930, 90 percent of China's banks and over 50 percent of foreign trade were concentrated in Shanghai (Wu 2003). In 1936, in its so-called "golden age", when Shanghai ranked as the 7th largest city in the world, its nature was rather "consumptive than productive.

After the Japanese occupation and the coming into power of the Communist Party, Shanghai underwent in the period between 1949 and 1978 a state-led industrialisation process that transformed the city from consumptive to productive. The development of Shanghai was associated with the state's priority of developing the national defense capacity via industrialisation. The socialist economy established measures to reduce consumption including household registration, suppressing consumer goods (including housing), constraining services, planning allocation of production materials, and establishing a mandatory purchase of grain and other agricultural products. By 1970, Shanghai concentrated 14 percent of total national industrial output and 33 percent of freight handled and value of export goods (Wu, 2003).

The open door policy announced in 1978 set the emergence of a semi-market economy, the activity of non-state sectors, and the energetic pursue of foreign investment. Special Economic Zones were first created in Guangzhou and Fujian and in 1988 Shanghai was granted a similar fiscal contracting system. The strategic need of a financial and trade centre in China to engage with the globalised world resulted in a strong support from the central state to develop Shanghai. The development of Pudong, announced by Li Peng in 1990, marks the beginning of an ultra-rapid urban development process.

Enabling measures

Since the establishment of the open door policy, the central government has embarked in a gigantic effort to re-engineer Shanghai as a place, its institutions, and to promote the city's attributes. In order to encourage FDI, Shanghai has formulated local economic measures and adopted a series of preferential policies (Wu, 2000). Actions include:

- Measures towards establishing a vernacular market system, including decentralisation and new taxation regimes
- Encouragement of real estate and construction as a central industry, including investment in mega infrastructure projects
- Place promotion strategies

Decentralisation and new tax regimes

The severe fiscal deficit and failing public finance in the late 1970s gave way to the introduction of the fiscal contract system, enabling localities to emerge as a significant entity. By the late 1980s, municipalities had gained control over urban land through authorising land leasing and granting planning permissions. In the 1990s the decentralisation chain reached district governments, who gained a whole array of administrative powers, including planning, financial management, public works, pricing of staple commodities, foreign trade and industrial and commercial administration.

The 1994 system divided tax into centrally collected, locally collected and taxes shared by central and local governments. Thus, local governments gained fiscal autonomy and the ability to decide local taxes. Concessions on the waving of development-related taxes were set to attract real estate development, as district governments are keen to promote the growth of tertiary industries, in particular high-density commercial developments and service

sectors, as these sectors can bring value-added tax and income tax which are now the main sources of local revenue.

Real estate

The keenness of local governments to adjust their regulative regimes to accommodate new investments has stimulated the influx of capital and procedures from global property markets. A land leasing system, and land development corporations have been established; land use and zoning are becoming based on market principles; and urban management has become more locally oriented to increase project's speed to market. The investment in infrastructure during the 8th Five Year Plan (90-95) and the 9th Five Year Plan (95-00) amounted to 125 billion RMB. Major projects completed during this decade include the Nanpu and Yangpu Bridges; the Inner Ring Road; the Outer Ring Road; Metro's line 2 which links the central area with Pudong; Pudong Gas Works; Pudong sewage treatment and water discharge; and Pudong's International Airport. The city's skyline has dramatically changed with the construction of symbolic Jin Mao Tower and the Oriental Pearl TV Tower; the city has more than 3,000 high-rise buildings (buildings with more than 18 stories) and there are 3,000 more in planning or construction stages. By the end of 1997, 1.62 billion square metres of old buildings have been demolished and 10,503 hectares of land developed, mostly induced by foreign investment.

Year	Foreign Investment		Total Ha. developed
	Ha. developed	Percentage of total	
1988-91	980.36	100	980.36
1992	2,071.55	100	2,071.55
1993	914.89	95.19	961.07
1994	1,568.02	82.77	1,894.36
1995	640.3	53.2	1,203.51
1996	378.66	42.15	898.28
1997	461.36	32.25	1,430.75
1998	421.05	39.58	1,063.67
Total	7,436.19	70.80	10,503.55

Table 2.
 Foreign Investment accounts for most of the newly developed Land
 Source: Wu 2003

Place promotion

Place promotion in Shanghai is strongly supported by the central government (Wu 2000). The target of this promotional campaign is both foreign investment agents and mobile human capital, depicting Shanghai as a pro-growth city that is willing to listen to market signals whilst maintaining an ability to offer a distinctive urban experience.

The place promotion discourse attempts to combine the modernity of forward-looking development with the restoration of the entrepreneurial values of its "golden age" and its historical roots. Shanghai broadcasts its rediscovered internationalism and cosmopolitanism through international schools for the children of expatriates, mushrooming golf courses, and new cultural venues such as the Shanghai Grand Theatre, in order to reassure business persons and skilled professionals about the city's stature and global lifestyle. Shanghai has organised a number of international events that have raised international visibility, such as the Fortune Forum in 1999 and the APEC meeting in 2001; currently the city is accelerating its face lift for the World Expo in 2010.

Urban conservation efforts

The conservation of a number of urban historic patrimonies has become an important component of Shanghai's place promotion efforts. Heritage buildings, and the experiences associated with them, bring an aura of respectability, continuity and artistic patronage to the city. Signature buildings / urban fabric symbolises a city in the imagination of external investors –one vital reason for the focal position of heritage in urban marketing (Graham, 2002). In its pathway to becoming a world city, Shanghai is looking to build on its own attributes to ensure that urban growth contributes towards a distinctive urban identity.

Urban heritage can both mark the singularity of a place and highlight its advantages over other places as a vibrant and attractive living environment, and act as a vital factor in the urban economy. A report produced by English Heritage (2000) points out that the historic environment is a powerful generator of wealth and prosperity, and a very positive factor in the value of life and lifestyle of its residents. The report admits difficulty in quantifying these claims and therefore acknowledges that decisions about historic environment largely rely upon value judgments.

In Shanghai, heritage preservation and re-utilisation is responsibility of the Department of Building Repairing & Renovation Management within the Municipal Government. The initial step for promoting preservation was established by Shanghai Municipal Order 8, concerning the "Administration for Shanghai Architectural Heritage Preservation", which went into effect in December 1991.

In 1999 Shanghai had 63 listed buildings, for 54 in Tokyo, 49 in Hong Kong and 44 in Singapore (Ng and Hills, 2003). The growing concern on issues of heritage conservation was given further impulse by the "Regulation of Protecting Areas and Units of Shanghai Architectural Heritage", which was approved by the Shanghai People Conference in July 2002. This Regulation has the category of a law, initiating a new stage in the city's concern for its built heritage. In 2004, according to the Department, Shanghai's listed buildings have reached 393, totalizing approximately 3 million square metres. In addition, the Municipal Government has designated 12 integrated heritage preservation areas (Figure 6): The Bund, People's Square, Yuyuan Garden, Nanjing Street (W), Hengshan Road / Fuxing Road, Yuyuan Road, Hongqiao Road, Shanyin Road, Tilanqiao, Longhua, Xinhua Road and Jiangwan. These preservation areas vary in size and nature and style of the protected urban fabric; however, most of the built heritage that the Municipality has protected corresponds to Shanghai's glorious period of the 1930s, and most of these areas are located within the area of the former French Concession and International Settlement.

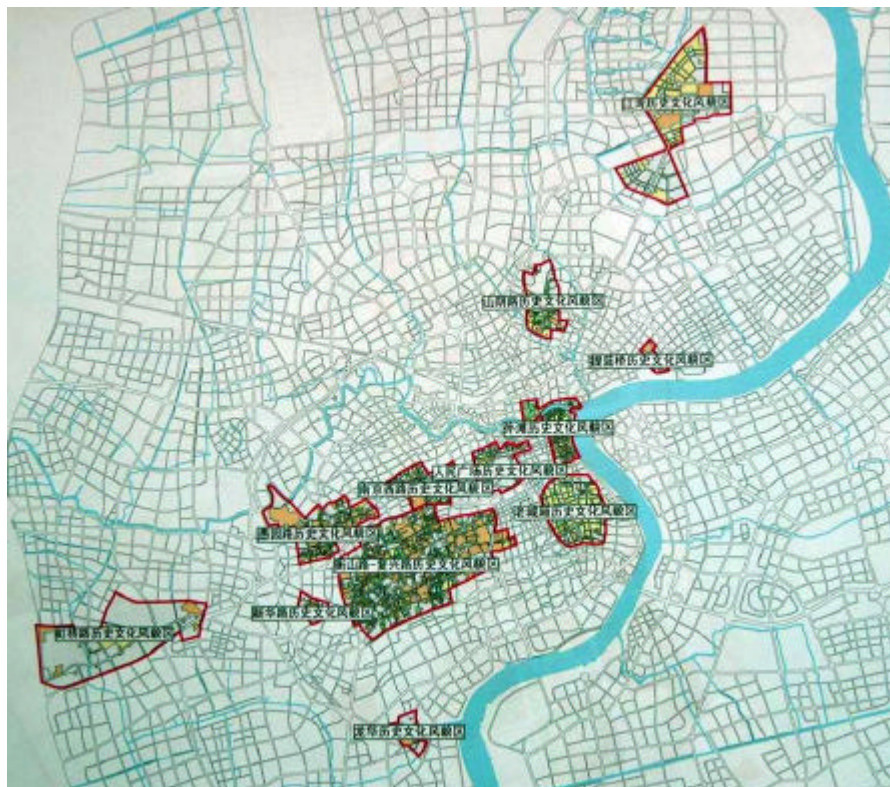


Figure 5.
Shanghai Preservation Areas
Source: Shanghai Municipality

According to a survey by the Department of Building Repairing & Renovation Management, the housing stock to be protected totalises 12 million square metres. Apartment buildings account for 1.19 million square metres, detached housing 1.47 million square metres, and terraced houses (*Shikumen*), 9.52 million square metres.

Shikumen houses are a dwelling typology unique to Shanghai. They originate in the houses in the Lower Yangtze River. Most of the houses were two-stories, post-and panel structures, with a horizontal courtyard in the front and the back. Clustered *Shikumen* houses were named *li*, and the corridors between houses *nong* (alley). A traditional stone gateway (*Shikumen* means stone gate) marked the entrance to alleys and gave the typology its name. The typology evolved to “new *Shikumen* houses”, which emerged around 1919 in the Western concessions. They were smaller in size, but the functional layout and quality of internal facilities was largely improved. They were built using Western materials and construction technologies (Lu et al, 2001). Before World War II, more than 80 percent of the population in the city lived in these dwellings typologies.

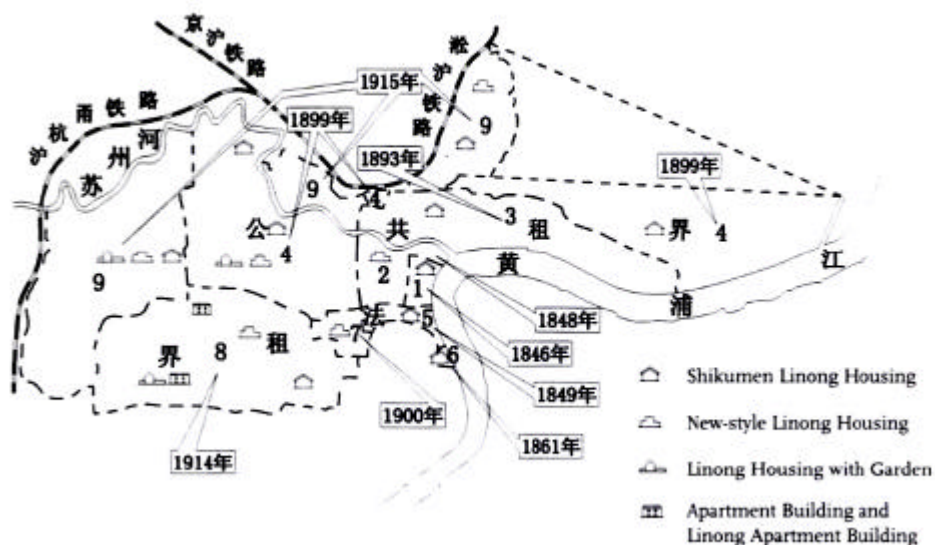


Figure 6
 Distribution of Housing Types in Shanghai from 1840 to 1949
 Source: Lu et al (2001)

Preservation plan

The preservation plan devised by the Bureau has established four different degrees of protection:

1. Prevents any modification in the building's facade, structural frame, layout and interior decoration.
2. Prevents modifications in the building's facade, structural frame, but allows basic layout and interior decoration alterations.
3. Prevents modifications in the building's facade and the structural frame, allowing interior alterations.
4. Prevents modifications only in the building's main facade.

The Shanghai Municipal Government has remarked the importance of preserving built heritage with a slogan that encourages to [sic] "Let the city fully appear the modern vigor metropolis at same time with historic cultural heritages" The government's drive to re-create identity through built heritage preservation is captured in yet another slogan which literally points out that "New construction is development and preserved upgrading is development as well." This ideological encouragement of building protection is tangibly supported by discounted property and income taxes to be given to those projects of reparation and maintenance, where private sector involvement is welcomed.

Lynch (1981) defines identity in an urban context as "the extent to which a person can recognise or recall a place as being distinct from other places." Concurrently, one of the themes in Shanghai's place promotion strategy is History, or at least a very specific part of it:

fervor for historicism is focused on the period of “the glorious past of Asia’s largest financial centre” (Wu, 2000), re-creating an identity of trade, entrepreneurship and monetary success. The evaluation of what areas and buildings merit preservation corresponds to a Standing Committee, which is headed by the Vice Mayor and includes members of the Bureaus of Housing and Land, Planning, and Relics Administration. As official discourse depicts a successful urban life and devotes itself to promote such a vision, the vast majority of the buildings subject to conservation date from the period between 1920 and 1949. The majority of these building’s functions are related to power and financial importance: banks (such as the former Hong Kong Shanghai Bank in The Bund), official buildings (the Former French Council) or important people’s residences (Madam Song Qinglin’s). Traditional working-class *Shikumen* and *li-nongs* deserve less attention, and large amounts of these typologies have been subject to replacement by new towering residential complexes. This brings up the need to consider conservation efforts with not just single buildings in mind, but rather contemplating urban fabric proportions, such as the scale and relationship between solids (buildings) and voids (streets, squares).

However focused on a specific part of History, the state-driven campaign for conservation has resulted in an increased awareness of both private sector property developers and the *Shanghainese*. An example of this acceptance is Xintiandi, a successful mixed-use development located in the heart of Shanghai. The complex was promoted by property developer Shui On, whose corporate motto proclaims that “yesterday meets tomorrow in Shanghai today.” Xintiandi has a site area of 30,000 square metres and a gross floor area of 60,000 square metres, and features a number of restaurants, bars, street cafés, and retail, entertainment, commercial and residential facilities in restored *Shikumen* houses. The developer reconstructed selected buildings based on old design drawings; the original bricks and tiles were preserved before construction commenced.

Xintiandi attracts daily a large group of locals and tourists who give the area a vibrant urban lifestyle. The development has won the national “Innovation China 2001 - Architecture Award”, and the 2003 Award for Excellence from the Urban Land Institute. Xintiandi has become a model that other cities in China and East / South East Asia are looking to replicate, and besides its economic merits, its main virtue is that it has introduced an interest for conserving built heritage to public officials, private sector entrepreneurs, and the public.



Figure 7. Xintiandi

In place of a conclusion

According to Hill and Kim (2000) the competitive advantages of the (market-centred) world city are fluidity and mobility. Shanghai, after decades of operating within a structure based in precisely the opposite, has demonstrated a remarkable ability to establish, in a very short time, an urban development *modus operandi* as adjacent as possible to the comfort zone of international investment agents; and a capacity to mobilise forces towards creating a quality of life that will enable human capital to flourish.

What is extraordinary is the city's capacity to act and react simultaneously and integrally to social / cultural, environmental / natural and economic / procedural concerns, managing its urban assets towards fulfilling a clear mandate –to become a world city. Perhaps some of these actions may sometimes sound and feel rather cosmetic to the Westerner observer: maybe this is so because they are undertaken in Shanghai-speed, an ultrasonic activity dislocated from the meticulous enquiry that corsets other cities.

In terms of Shanghai's urban heritage, the best news is that there is still a lot of it out there. It's true that rapid development has caused an irreplaceable loss of heritage; but still Shanghai's heritage stock outnumbers that of its regional competitors (Hong Kong, Singapore, or, in another level, Tokyo); regulatory bodies have been created, laws passed, and there is an increasingly wide public interest on the subject as demonstrated by the growing number of listed buildings. The government's desire to offer an urban experience attractive to human capital is the drive for this interest today; revenues from the tourism industry are clearly on the horizon.

Whilst international market agents concentrate their input/output equation on a city's economical assets, its control capacity over business forces gives China a great opportunity (and responsibility) to learn from humankind's past, including its own, and trace a development road that simultaneously benefits social and environmental assets: an urban model for vernacular, sustainable globalisation in the developing world.

For researchers and practitioners, there is an opportunity in developing a quantitative approach to the inter-linkages between culture, quality of life and city competitiveness. How do we measure aura? What is the empirical impact of heritage in urban quality? What would be the cost of a *tabula rasa* approach in world city formation process? What would be the perception of Paris without the Champs Elysees or Rome without the steps of Piazza de Spagna? And that of Shanghai without the Bund?

References

Asia Week. *Best Cities in Asia for 2000*. <http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/features/asiacities2000/> (accessed 2 June 2004)

Camagni, R (2002) On the Concept of Territorial Competitiveness: Sound or Misleading? *Urban Studies*. Vol. 39, No. 13.

Castells, M (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society*. London: Blackwell

Clark, D (1996) *Urban World/Global City*. London: Routledge

English Heritage (2000). *The Power of Place*. London: English Heritage.

Friedmann, J, and Wolff, G (1986) World City Hypothesis. *Development and Change*. Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 69-84

Friedmann, J (2000) World cities revisited: a comment. *Urban Studies*. Vol. 30, No. 13, pp. 2535-2536.

Hill, R C and Kim, J W (2000) Global Cities and Developmental States: New York, Tokyo and Seoul. *Urban Studies*. Vol. 37, No. 12, pp. 2167-2195.

Jones Lang Lasalle. 2002. *Property Futures Report: Winning Cities*. London: Jones Lang Lasalle.

Li, Peng (1992) Speech at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

Lo F C and Marcotullio P J (2000) *Globalization and the Sustainability of Cities in the Asia Pacific Region*. Tokyo: UNU Press

Lu, J, Rowe, P G and Zhang J (2001) *Modern Urban Housing in China, 1884-2000*. New York: Prestel

Lynch, K (1981) *A Theory of Good City Form*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Marcotullio, P J, Piracha A L and King C. (2003) *Urban Ecosystems and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Towards an Inclusive Framework*. UNU/IAS Working Paper No. 105.

Marcotullio, P J and Piracha, A L (2003) *Urban Ecosystem Analysis. Identifying Tools and Methods*. Tokyo: UNU/IAS

Marcotullio, P J, Rothenberg S and Nakahara M (2003) Globalisation and urban environmental transitions: Comparison of New York and Tokyo's experiences. *Regional Science*. No. 37, pp. 369-390

Mercer. *World-wide quality of life survey*. <http://www.mercerhr.com> (accessed 2 June 2004)

Ng, M K and Hills P (2003) World Cities or great cities? A comparative study of five Asian metropolises. *Cities*. Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 151-165.

People's Republic of China (1994) *China's Agenda 21. White Paper on China's Population, Environment and Development for the 21st Century*. Beijing: China Environmental Science Press.

Rose, F (1998) *Globalisation, Regionalisation and Chinese Cities. A Case Study of Shanghai's Integration into Global and Regional Urban-Economic Systems*. UNU/IAS Working Paper No. 51. Tokyo: UNU/IAS

Sassen, S (1991) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Shanghai Municipal Government (2002) *Shanghai Urban Transportation White Paper*. Shanghai: Shanghai Municipality.

Shanghai Municipal Government. *Basic Facts*. <http://www.shanghai.gov.cn> (accessed 10 June 2004)

Shanghai Environment Protection Bureau. *Three-year Environmental Action Plans*. <http://www.sepb.gov.cn> (accesses 14 June 2004)

Simmie, J (2001). *Innovative Cities*. London: Spon

UNESCAP. *Integrating environmental considerations into economic policy making processes*. www.unescap.org. (accessed 10 June 2004)

The World Bank (1997) *Clear Water, Blue Skies. China's Environment in the New Century*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank

The World Bank (1997) *China 2020*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank

Wu, F (2000) Place Promotion in Shanghai, PRC. *Cities*, Vol.17, No. 5, pp 349-361.

Wu, F (2000) The Global and Local Dimensions of Place-making: Remaking Shanghai as a World City. *Urban Studies*. Vol. 37, No.8, pp. 1359-1377.

Wu, F (2003) The (Post-) Socialist Entrepreneurial City as a State Project: Shanghai Reglobalisation in Question. *Urban Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 9, pp. 1673-1698.

Yin, Y and Wang, M (2000) China's urban environmental sustainability in global context. In Lowe N et al, eds., *Consuming Cities*. London: Routledge.

Yueng, Y M and Lo, F C (1995) *Globalization and World City Formation in Pacific Asia*. UNU/IAS Working Paper No. 16

Endnotes

¹ Diagram by the author based on Quality of Life Model by Ng and Hills (2003), which was modified from Department of the Environment, Transport and Region (1999). Quality of Life Counts: Indicators for a Strategy of Sustainable Development for the UK: A Baseline Assessment