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MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF UKRAINE
KHARKIV STATE ACADEMY OF DESIGN AND ARTS

Research on Landscape Renewal Design of Historical and Cultural Blocks from the Perspective of Cultural Genes

— A Case Study of Dongpo Road, Yixing

文化基因视域下历史文化街区景观更新设计研究——以宜兴东坡路为例



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Graduation Thesis Defence · 2026

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Research Background and Significance

Research Objectives

01

Inherit and Revive the Cultural Genes

The renewal of Dongpo Road is not just a physical rebuild, but the reactivation of the block’s cultural genes.

02

Raise the Cultural Value

Move from a static heritage site to a living cultural experience: exhibition halls, zisha workshops and a study route.

03

Improve Layout and Function

Better walking and seating, separated traffic, and traditional teahouses kept alongside new cultural retail.

Research Significance

01

From Static Preservation to Living Heritage

Heritage usually stays behind glass. Here it enters daily life — poetry lamps, zisha-coloured signage, plazas people use every day.

02

Solving Real Problems in Historic Renewal

Many renewals copy a generic template and cities lose their identity. This study decodes local genes to build a recognisable image.

03

Completing the Theoretical Framework

A framework built on cultural genes, linking theory, spatial logic and practice.

Two

Current Research Status

Research Status at Home and Abroad

01

Domestic Research

Research moved from large-scale demolition to “micro-renewal”, focused on extracting and translating cultural genes.

02

Abroad I · Single-Building Restoration

Early laws protected single monuments, such as Britain’s 1882 Ancient Monuments Act. Buildings survived, but street life was lost.

03

Abroad II · Renewal and Community Participation

Whole districts were protected and residents took part. Heritage lives through people, not top-down clearance.

04

Abroad III · Sustainable Renewal and Activation

Adaptive reuse of historic buildings, and cultural-creative industries.

Case Study · Yongqingfang, Guangzhou

Yongqingfang on Enning Road is the root of Xiguan culture. Before renewal: dangerous housing, weathered arcades, tangled cables.

The project used “micro-surgery” rather than mass demolition — keeping grey-brick arcade facades, wooden sliding doors and Manchu windows, and repairing broken walls with traditional methods.

What to take from it: keep the grain of the block.





Case Study · Goushanli, Hangzhou

Goushanli sits at the corner of Nanshan Road and Hefang Street, beside West Lake. The design follows “the finest returns to the simplest”: new lane walls echo the deep Jiangnan alley.

Republican-era buildings keep their grey brick and tile, repaired one by one; old bricks are reused as landscape features, and bronze details set old against new.

What to take from it: organise old and new through transition.





Case Study · King’s Cross, London

King’s Cross was an industrial transport hub that declined after the Second World War. Renewal began in 1996, when St Pancras became the Eurostar terminal.

The method is “repair and stitch”: new roads, two walking routes, and a north-south public space linking the nodes. Historic buildings kept their facades, with new functions behind.

What to take from it: stitch scattered heritage together with public space.



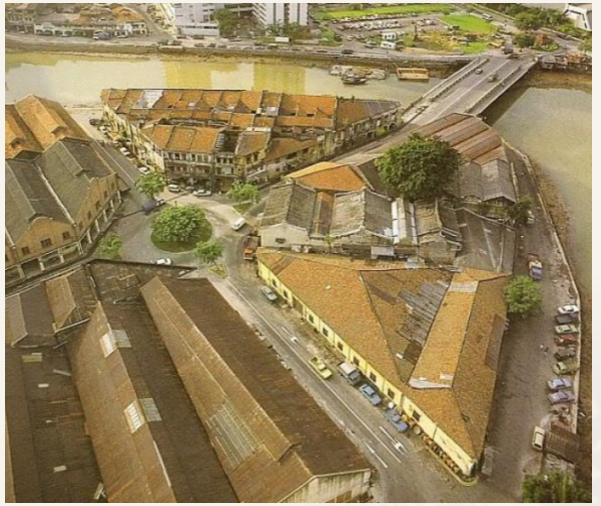


Case Study · Clarke Quay, Singapore

Clarke Quay is a waterfront district of five 19th-century warehouse blocks, left derelict when container traffic moved away.

The renewal keeps the original facades and rebuilds the interiors, then uses bold colour — warm red walls with grass-green shutters — and lighting to fuse tradition and modernity.

What to take from it: authentic outside, new inside, colour to bring it back to life.





Three

Research Content and Methods

Research Content

01

Extracting Cultural Elements

Representative elements drawn from Dongpo’s poetry, painting and daily life, and from zisha clay, simplified into landscape vocabulary.

02

Landscape Furniture as Narrative

Those elements become sculptures, reliefs and cultural walls showing the block’s history and folk customs.

03

Spatial Layout and Zoning

Cultural display, commercial service and leisure zones, each with its own programme.

04

Architecture and Modern Elements

Modern materials improve thermal and ventilation performance; the appearance keeps its historic tone.

Decoding the Cultural Genes

01

Dongpo Culture

Su Dongpo bought farmland here, leaving the line “I will grow old in Yangxian”.

02

Zisha Clay Culture

Its genes lie in the shaping lines, the beating-and-joining craft, and “a world within a teapot”.

03

Jiangnan Water Town Life

Living by water, small bridges, boats, white walls and dark tiles — a quiet way of living with nature.

Research Methods

01

Literature Review

Cultural-gene theory and district-renewal theory; local gazetteers, Su Shi’s collected works and the conservation plan.

02

Field Survey

Photos of street texture and facades, questionnaires on residents and visitors, and a survey of the surviving lane pattern.

03

Case Analysis

Renewals at home and abroad — Suzhou Pingjiang Road and the Marais in Paris.

04

Induction and Deduction

Derive shared principles from the cases, then test how well they fit Dongpo Road.

Four

Field Investigation

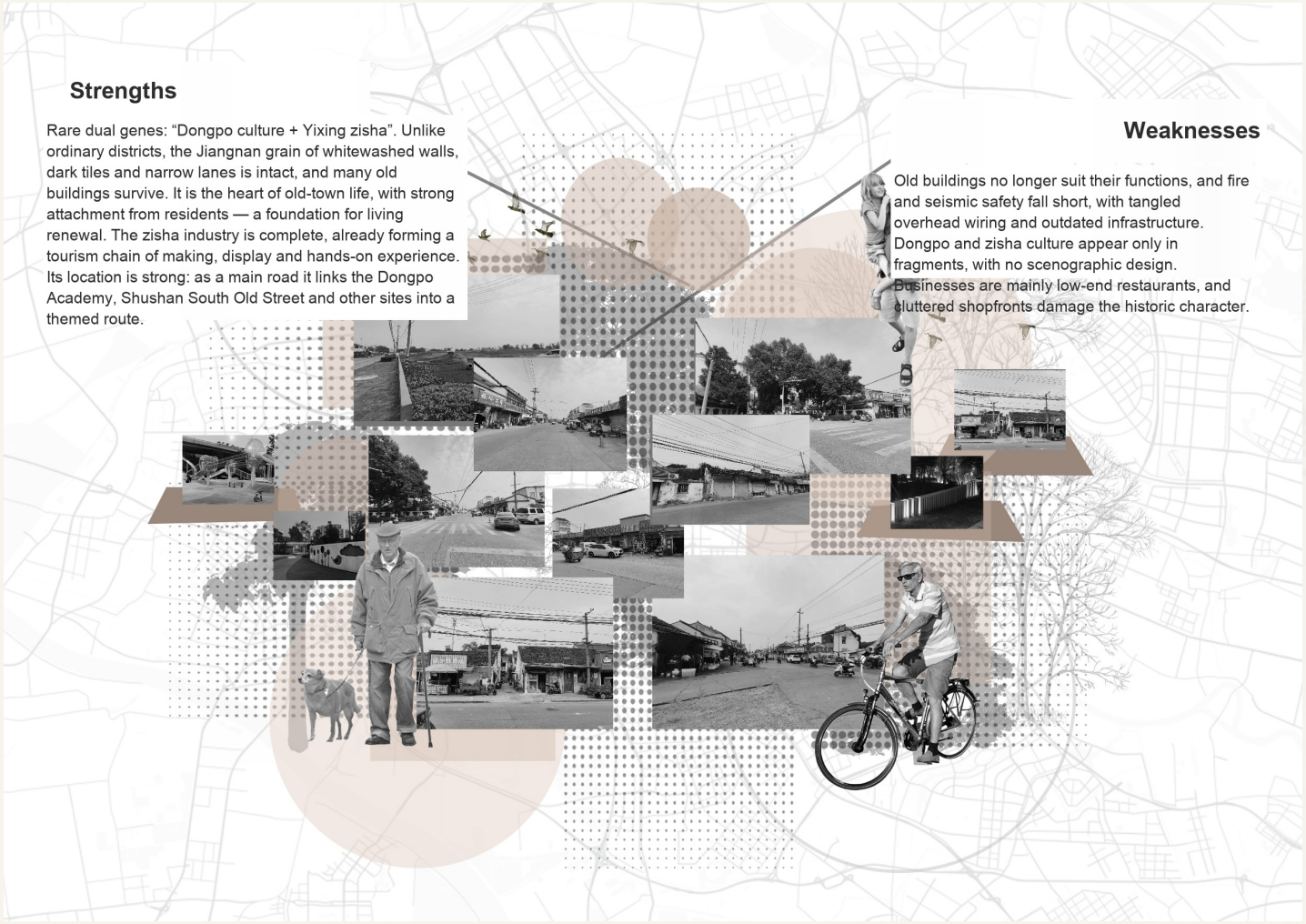
Location Analysis

Locating the site step by step — province, city, town, block — places Dongpo East Road in a dense cluster of ceramic-culture resources.



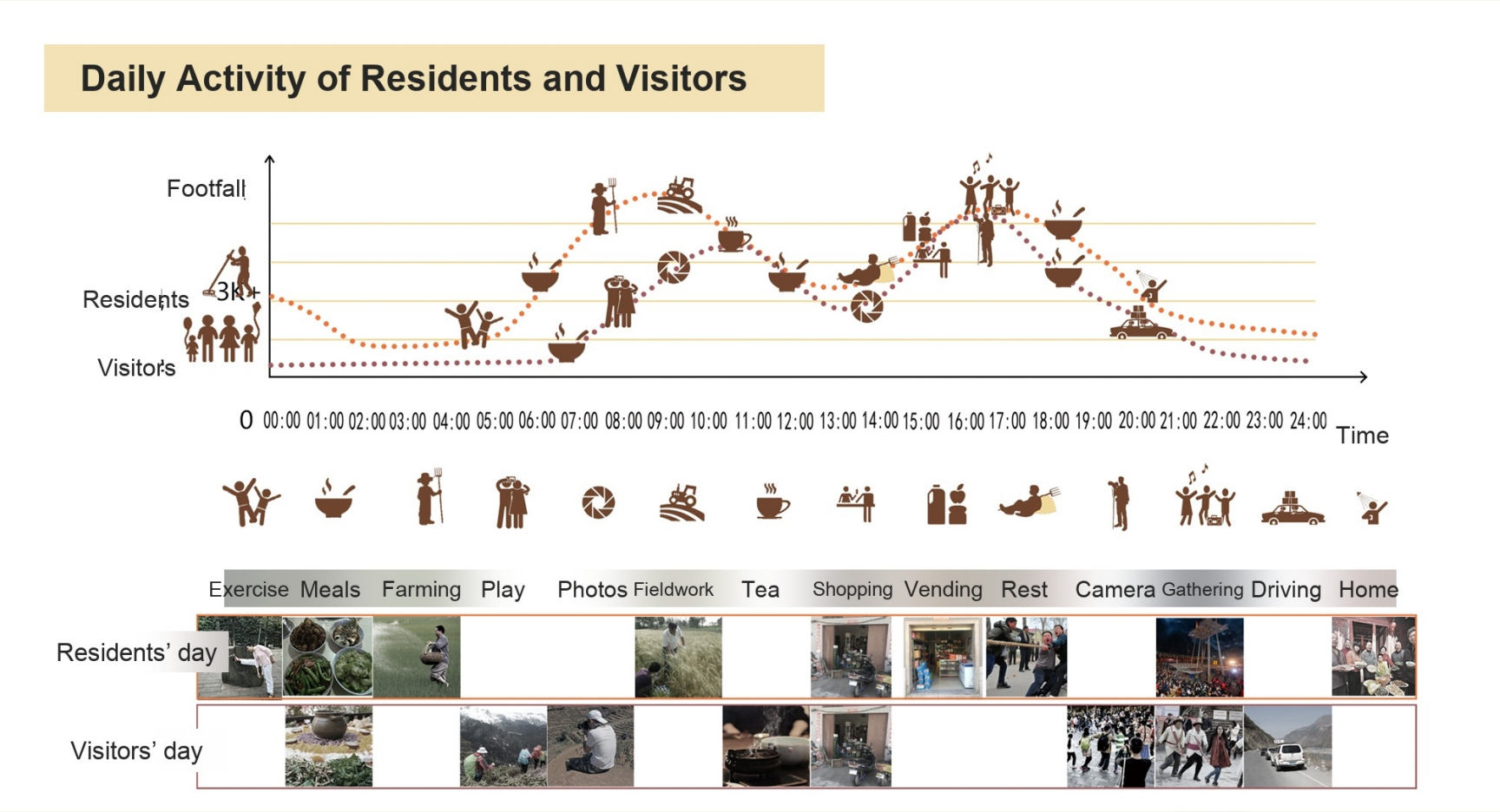
Site Analysis

A SWOT reading sets out the strengths to build on and the problems this renewal must answer.



User Analysis

How residents and visitors use the site through the day gives the basis for zoning, business mix and facilities.



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Innovations of the Topic

Innovations

01 Two Cultural IPs Working Together

Dongpo culture and zisha culture treated as one system, not two themes — zisha objects carrying Dongpo’s poetry.

02 Protecting the Living Texture of the Block

No mass demolition. Buildings repaired as they are, with modern services inside; traditional shops stay and take on cultural detail.

03 Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Reconstruction

Genes from Dongpo’s years in Yixing become sculpture and engraved paving, combining history and parametric design.

Six

Design Outcomes

I

Historical District





Site Plan

01 Main Entrance · Archway Plaza

Historical District · 1/4

The main entrance to the historic district. A red-brown timber archway marks the gateway, framed by white walls, moon windows and red lanterns; grey stone paving ties the plaza to the old buildings.





Site Plan

02 Traditional Street Frontage · Dongpo Lane

Historical District · 2/4

Dongpo Lane, the block’s main street. White walls, timber eaves, lattice doors and rows of red lanterns set the rhythm; a linear drain guides the eye into the lane.





Site Plan

03 Water Courtyard & Sky Bridge

Historical District · 3/4

A water courtyard crossed by a timber lattice bridge. Ceramic jars along the bank glow from within — turning zisha culture into something you can walk up to.





Site Plan

04 Courtyard Retail Garden

Historical District · 4/4

A courtyard retail garden. Red lanterns and stone benches keep the scale of the old street; a grid of rust-red corten planters sets new material against the historic base.

II

Historical Park





Site Plan

01 Ceramic Culture Plaza

Historical Park · 1/9

The park’s central gathering space. A concentric plaza holds a group of potter figures, backed by walls inlaid with broken ceramic and tile.





Site Plan

02 Wellness Water Garden · Zen Mist

Historical Park · 2/9

Still water meets lawn. A timber deck and daybed sit in the shallow pool as mist rises; a pavilion and thatched parasols give shade at the edge.





Site Plan

03 Local Craft Market

Historical Park · 3/9

A rammed-earth wall forms the backdrop, set with ceramic jars, bamboo trays and an old bicycle. A giant teapot carved with “ceramics” sits on top.





Site Plan

05 Zen Tea Garden

Historical Park · 5/9

Banners reading “Zen and tea as one” lead in. A large teapot pours toward a single cup, with bamboo seats under the trees.





Site Plan

04 Calligraphy and Seal Carving Garden

Historical Park · 4/9

Interlocking white seal stones rise like opening pages, carved with running-script calligraphy and marked with vermilion seals.





Site Plan

06 Ground Chessboard

Historical Park · 6/9

A raised stone platform becomes a chessboard you can walk on, with more than twenty stone pieces on a grey grid.





Site Plan

07 Waterfront Family Play Area

Historical Park · 7/9

Natural ponds and timber walks. Rope swings, climbing frames and rope nets in warm wood sit on the lawn; a pavilion and deck face the water.





Site Plan

08 Tea Ceremony Terraced Garden

Historical Park · 8/9

A rust-red corten screen is the focus, its cut-out landscape framing the characters for “tea ceremony”. Below, planted terraces step down beside a dry stream.





Site Plan

09 Aerial View

Historical Park · 9/9

The masterplan from above. A central axis runs from the south entrance through a circular tree plaza to the lake, with geometric garden nodes around the water.

Thank You

I welcome your comments and suggestions

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