

GUANGZHOU

Creating New Vitality for Guangzhou, the Renown City of Historical and Cultural Heritage

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Guangzhou is among the first 24 cities conferred the title *the Renown City of Historical and Cultural Heritage* by the State Council in 1982. The main reasons are as follows. First, it has a very long history of city construction. Dating from 214 B.C. (the 33rd year of the reign of Qinshihuang) when the construction of "Renxiao City" started, the city is over 2,200 years old now, during which time numerous historical relics and sites as well as glorious culture are left behind. Second, it is the locality of ancient capitals, especially the Mausoleum of the Nan Yue Kingdom of the Western Han Dynasty and the relics of its Royal Garden and Palace, which have been listed among the top ten national archeological discoveries in the 1970s and 1990s. Third, Guangzhou is the starting point of the "Marine Silk Route" and ever-prosperous foreign trade port city. Fourth, it is one of the cradles of China's modern revolution, where Dr. Sun Yat-Sen led an uprising and established revolutionary regime three times.

Over the years, the Guangzhou Municipality has followed the principle of effective preservation, rational utilization and enhanced management under the precondition of maintaining the features of historical and cultural heritages. Under this principle, we have carefully combed major sites of historic interest, formulated regulations on operational management and construction, reinforced policies on coordination and control, extended the historical and cultural pulse so as to create a city life full of vitality and cultural connotation.

Guangzhou has its unique understanding of the preservation of historical and cultural heritages.

First, general consideration, i.e. to properly handle the relationship between preservation and development in a strategic way. We do not simply produce museums to preserve the historical and cultural heritages. Instead, we integrate those heritages into our modern life in a duly way, thus creating a modern vigorous city with rich historic and cultural heritages.

Second, selective key preservation of glorious snippets of different periods in the city's history of development so that some memory bearing the features of each stage of development will be left in the city.

Third, the preservation of the historical and cultural Cities relies on the active involvement of the municipal leadership and the public besides attaching great importance to the suggestions by experts and scholars. The job of the Municipality is to seek a common understanding among the government, experts and scholars as well as the general public.

Fourth, enhancement of citizens' pride through the preservation of historical heritages, so every one living in the city is proud of its history.

In recent years, Guangzhou has made great endeavors in creating a vigorous historical and cultural city.

(I), combing the main sites of historic interest of the city and seeking an organic integration of preservation of historical streets and individual buildings.

With over 2000 year's history, Guangzhou houses numerous but scattered sites of historic interest. Then how can they be highlighted in the preservation work? Guangzhou's practice is to comb the main sites of historic interest and link them with a certain theme by taking an overall approach to the preservation of city, and sort out the historical buildings in view of their architectural and cultural values through scientific evaluation for categorized preservation. In addition, top priority is given to the preservation of historical buildings and sites of historic interest associated with important historical events and prominent figures.

We have identified three key themes in the evolution process of Guangzhou urban development history.

First, the theme of the Nan Yue Kingdom. Since the 1980s, the Mausoleum of the Nan Yue Kingdom of the West Han Dynasty, the underground stone structure of its court, its Royal Garden and Palace have been discovered one after another. These historical heritages dating from over 2000 years ago record the most original trace of the city's founding and are of great artistic and cultural values.

Second, the theme of industrial and commercial activities. Guangzhou has a glorious trading history as the starting point of China's ancient Marine Silk Route and industry and commerce have long been the engines of the city's development. The sites of the Shisanhang Foreign Trade Zone, Huangpu Port and Light House in Guangta Temple are related to this theme.

Third, the theme of revolutions in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China. The Wanmu Thatched Cottage, Whampoa (Huangpu) Military Academy and the Marshal Hall are closely related to this theme.

The preservation based on the historical traces and sites has enabled a clear target and strategic arrangement of the preservation work. The above-mentioned three themes undoubtedly include the historical sites with the most historical, cultural and social values in the history of Guangzhou city. They are also the cream that represents the characteristics of this historical and cultural city.

(II) adopting different preservation modes in accordance with different units of historical cultural heritages.

The units of historical and cultural heritages mainly include the following four types:

Historical streets and sections with distinct Lingnan characteristics. As the major contents of the city appearance, such heritages mainly include traditional residential houses, traditional Qilou streets—the traditional Cantonese shopping arcade architecture, traditional commercial streets and old-style garden houses and architecture complexes with distinct Lingnan characteristics.

The great number of historical buildings, memorial buildings above the ground and historical sites underground. They are the important connotation and fundamental basis of the city. Though scattered around the city, they are relatively concentrated in the old districts of the city, such as the Zhenhai Tower, Guangxiao Temple and Five-Celestial Taoist Temple.

Excellent buildings of modern time. Characteristic and representative buildings of modern time in Guangzhou are the important scenes that constitute the appearance of Guangzhou, e.g. the Sun Yat-Sen's Memorial Hall and the Yue Customs Office.

Sites of historic interest, ancient villages and trees, which embody the history of the city, such as the Baiyun Hills, the Julong Village, and the ancient villages in Conghua.

The preservation units of historical and cultural relics in Guangzhou are numerous, which differ not only in preservation levels, such as state, provincial, municipal and internal control levels, but also in nature. Some ancient buildings are of very high architectural values and represent the architectural styles or schools of a certain period in history, such as the Zhenhai Tower, No. 1 Lingnan Building and Chen Clan Academy. Guangzhou Municipality strictly preserves the architectural forms and colors of such buildings and forbids random alterations. Some revolutionary sites or revolutionary memorial buildings are of great historical and international significance, such as the old site of Guangdong provincial Peasants' Association, the old site of Vietnamese Youth Revolutionary Association and the former residence of Lu Xun in Baiyun Building. The values of such buildings do not lie in the buildings themselves (just ordinary ones), but in their memorial significance. Guangzhou Municipality has turned these old sites into museums for the public to visit and to reminisce about history. We maintain that there is no one unified form for the preservation of historical and cultural relics. Instead, after in-dept investigation and research, we have distinguished the different types and scientifically defined the preservation methods

(III) attaching great importance to the function shift of historical buildings by effectively combining the new functions of modern city with the ancient forms and thus giving new vitality to the historical buildings.

In order for the historical buildings and streets/districts to exert new vitality, it is necessary to inject new elements in them, so that they can meet the various functional demands of a modern metropolis. Only in this way can the old and the new attain perfect integration, and the functional demands of

modern city life be met and the ancient architectural heritages well preserved as potential culture. Mere emphasis of preservation without a practical operation model won't work.

In 2002, during the renovation project of Beijing Road, the famous pedestrian street, 11 layers of road relics built from the Tang Dynasty to the Republic of China were unearthed in the northern section of the road, and 5 layers of the foundation of the arched buildings discovered in the southern section. The Guangzhou Municipality immediately worked out the strategy of preservation and utilization and carried out scientific preservation and display of the underground relics in the northern and southern sections of Beijing Road. A reinforced glass shield was installed over the relics, both solving the problems of leakage and humidity and guaranteeing the smooth flow of people and special vehicles of municipal administration. Now, tourists can clearly see the thousand-year-old street through the reinforced glass. In this way, the cultural atmosphere of Beijing Road is strengthened, attracting more and more people from at home abroad. As a result, the thousand-year-old street and the modern commercial street add glamour to each other.

Located on Xiaoguwei Island, the Guangzhou Higher Education Mega Center started its construction in 2003, during which nearly 3000 historical relics and four important historical sites including the Mausoleums of two emperors of Nan Han Dynasty and the tombs of stone men and stone horses of the Ming Dynasty were unearthed. These archeological sites are important places of cultural interest in that they represent buildings of the different historical periods and embody the historical background of Xiaoguwei Island. The Guangzhou Municipality has decided to preserve the buildings on the spot, mapping out the preservation area and construction control zone in strict accordance with the requirements of preservation units of historical and cultural relics. The preservation work has been integrated into the overall plan of the mega center so that the appearance of the ancient buildings preserved on the spot is in harmony with the overall plan. Thus a unique garden in the garden, i.e. the garden of historical sites in the school areas, has been built. By now, the construction of the folk and cultural village in Lianxi Village of Xiaoguwei Island, i.e. the Museum of Guangzhou Higher Education Mega Center, has been completed. About one thousand historical and cultural relics unearthed on the island will be displayed, which realize the coordination and organic integration of preservation and construction of the mega center.

In addition, during the construction of South China Teachers' University on the mega center, the Mausoleum of Emperor Kang, the first ancestor of the Nan Han Kingdom during the Five Dynasties and Ten States was discovered. The mausoleum is unique in its watchtowers on the four corners and the square mausoleum on a round stand at the upper part of the underground palace, which are seldom seen in other mausoleums in China. In order to protect this historical site, the Municipality immediately readjusted the school plan of the university by integrating the mausoleum display into the teaching building, which has been decided to be used by the History Department, a perfect unity of functions.

(IV) properly handling the relationship between preservation and construction and carrying out appropriate urban activities, thus creating a win-win situation between development and preservation.

In recent years, with the construction of large scale infrastructures such as the MTR, the Inner-Ring Road, the urban arteries, the conflict between preservation and development has become increasingly acute. In the various urban construction projects, the Municipality requires all construction units to properly handle the relationship between development and preservation when preservation units of historical and cultural relics are involved or when relics and historical sites have been discovered. The construction projects have to be fully testified by various parties so as to avoid construction destruction. For example, the Municipality approved of the construction project of Guangming Square, a 34-storeyed residential and commercial building on Xihu Road in 1998. However, as the relic of an ancient wooden water gate was discovered during the construction, the project came to a stop in March 2000. This has been found to be the southernmost building relic of the Nan Yue Kingdom through archeological findings of Guangzhou. It provides important evidence for the study of changes along the Pearl River shores in the city development. It is also the earliest wooden water gate discovered in China or even the whole world and thus is of very high research value. By the end of 2003, the Municipality formulated the principle of both preserving the historic relic and constructing the Guangming Square well. The guideline of integrating relic preservation, appreciation and utilization was adopted. The new plan thus created cancels the residential function of the building. Instead it is used solely for business purposes. Within the commercial area, appreciation space for the wooden water has been preserved, harmonizing city construction and relic preservation. The project has been completed after satisfactorily solved all the problems. The relic of the wooden water gate within the commercial area of Guangming Square has become the first "Indoor Publicly-Opened Relic" in China, attracting large numbers of visitors and bringing greater business opportunities.

Most buildings along the Shangxiajiu Road and Dishipu Road are Qilou—the traditional Cantonese shopping arcade architecture. This is a district with rich historical values, but many houses are dilapidated. If not preserved properly, they will disappear with the passage of time. In order to maintain the old appearance of the old district, the Guangzhou Municipality decides to keep these Qilou. Consequently, it is faced with impending problems such as the increasingly shabby buildings, inability to expand the streets and the lagging development of Shangxiajiu. In view of these problems, the Municipality endeavors to turn Shangxiajiu into a pedestrian street. As a result, both the Qilou architecture and the commercial atmosphere enjoyed in the past are maintained. In September 1995, the Shangxiajiu and Dishipu pedestrian street was completed. This plan has proved successful in the development of Shangxiajiu. The plan has not only preserved the traditional Qilou, but activated the business opportunities on the precondition of avoiding traffic problems. Shangxiajiu is still one of the

bustling business sections in the old districts. People flock to this street all the year round, bringing great vitality to the historical street.

(V) Making historical buildings (structures) unique landmarks of the city, which have become an integral part of the urban space layout and highlighted the characteristics of the city.

The geographic locations and the architectural forms of Guangzhou's historical buildings have profound historical background and origin, occupying important positions in the overall urban space layout. From Zhenhai Tower on Yuexiu Hills, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's Memorial Monument and Hall, Guangzhou City Council, People's Park, Haizhu Square to Haizhu Bridge, a 5-km long axis of the traditional ancient city has been formed. This is a green corridor linking the Yuexiu Hills and the Pearl River and embodying Guangzhou's layout mountains and waters and it is abundant in fairy tales and historical stories. The ancient verse of "The Peak of north-coming Wuling mountains; the end of the country at the River" is used to describe Guangzhou's unique contour of mountains and rivers. The peak and the river here refer to the Yuexiu Hills and the Pearl River respectively. And Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's Memorial Hall is the nucleus of the traditional city axis.

Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Memorial Hall, an octagonal building with grand presence, features red pillars, yellow walls and sapphire blue glazed tiles, as well as an arched round roof inlaid with glass. It spans as wide as a few dozen meters in the absence of a single pillar. It is a world famous traditional big arch building combining the Chinese and Western styles. The hall has become an important landmark of Guangzhou and has been integrated into the overall urban space layout as the nucleus of the traditional city axis.

In recent years, Guangzhou has painstakingly renovated its waterways. During the dredging process, ancient bridges with historical values are preserved, so they can not only facilitate the transportation on the two sides of the river, but also formed waterway scenes with historical significance, for example, the Futong Bridge over the Xiushui River in Shiweitang, Fangcun District was built in the Ming Dynasty; the Minling Bridge over the Dachongkou Waterway and the Yungui Bridge over the Yungui Waterway in Haizhu District built in the Qing Dynasty. The ancient bridges have witnessed the urban space layout of "densely distributed rivers and crisscrossed waterways". Today they are merged into the modern city life.

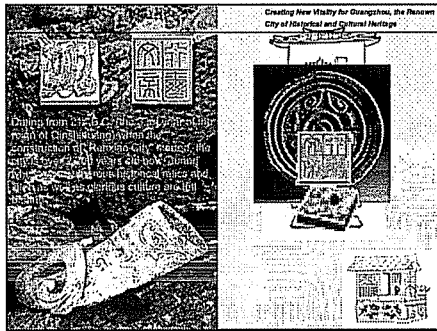
(VI) properly handling the conflict between renovation of dilapidated houses and preservation of historical and cultural relics, combining community construction with preservation of historical and cultural streets/districts, thus creating new vitality for the ancient city.

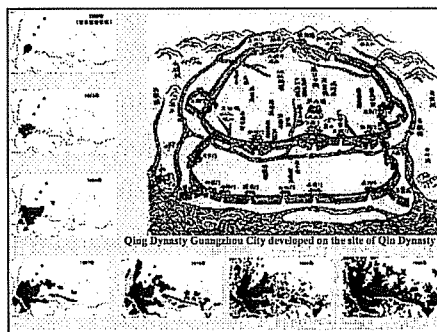
In recent years, Guangzhou has adhered to the principle of incorporating the “renovation of dilapidated houses” with the optimization of urban environment and combining community construction with preservation of historical and cultural streets/districts. It has attached great importance to make in-depth exploitation of the business opportunities and values after the completion of renovation, thus new vigor and vitality are brought to the ancient city.

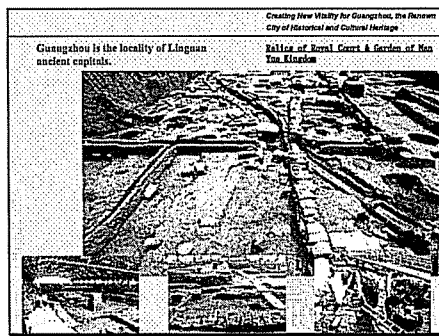
Sanlian Street, located in the folk zone of Xiguan residential buildings in Liwan District of Guangzhou is a typical historical preservation district. Guangzhou has inherited its Cantonese-featured habitat layout and style since the Qing Dynasty. The main features include: high concentration in space with narrow and zigzag alleys, free, practical and concentrated community layout; houses with small floor area and narrow neighborhoods which are amiable and appropriate. For historical reasons, many of these houses are dilapidated. In view of such situations, the Guangzhou Municipality has adopted a method which involves the renovation plan, financing of road construction and greening-up project by the government and financing of renovation and upgrading of old houses by the owners. Thus the initiatives of the residents to renovate their own houses have been brought into full play. Their active participation not only removes the danger of dilapidated houses but also restores the historical features of the original buildings. The renovation work of dilapidated houses is not just simple refurbishment and repair, but combination with the construction of Xiguan folk customs. As a result, Xiguan has been built into “Guangzhou’s Historical Museum with No Walls”. The shabby and dwarfed old houses in the historical zone of Baosheng Shadi in Liwan District have been turned into mansions with rich Lingnan features. Furthermore, community squares have been added, within which tall ancient banyans, zigzag cobbled corridors and the imitations ancient teahouses constitute the scenes of Xiguan gardens with no walls. And after the historical zone of Duobao Road has said goodbye to the dilapidated houses, more and more businessmen have been attracted here, a clear indication of increasing business opportunities.

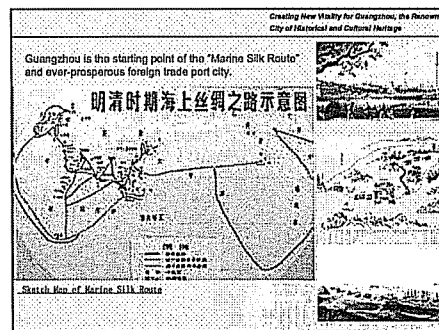
The only charm of the past is its past, while the vitality of today lies in its great future. In this sense, city is a historical and cultural phenomenon. Each epoch leaves its trace in the city construction. It is the need of modern civilization to preserve the memories of the city, the extensibility of history and the development sequence of human civilization. In the process of preserving history and culture, we are increasingly aware that excellent historical and cultural relics are important contents of modern cities, whose modernization does not just mean skyscrapers, overpasses, elevated roads, but requires consummate infrastructure, favorable eco-environment and profound historical and cultural connotation. Our mission is not just to preserve these historical and cultural heritages for preservation’s sake, but more importantly, to give these heritages new vigor and vitality in the modernized city construction.

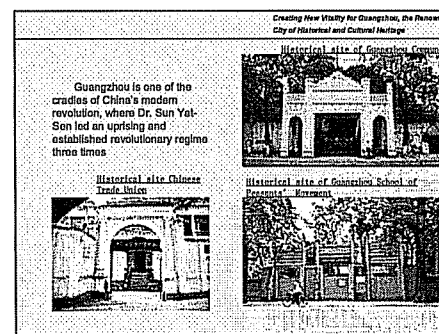




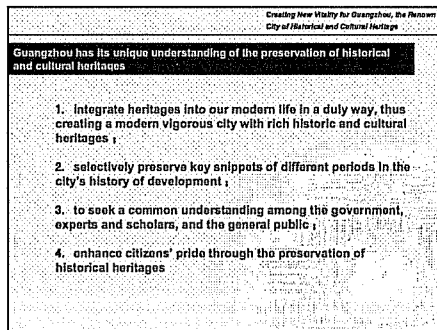


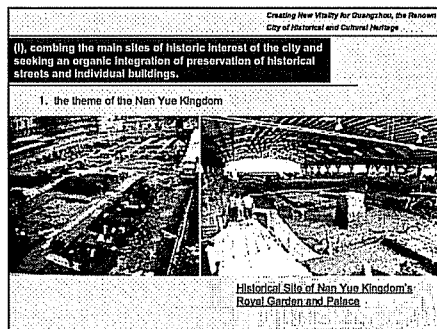


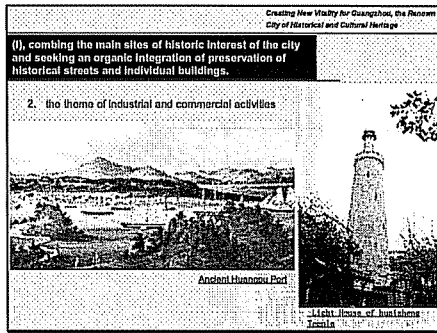


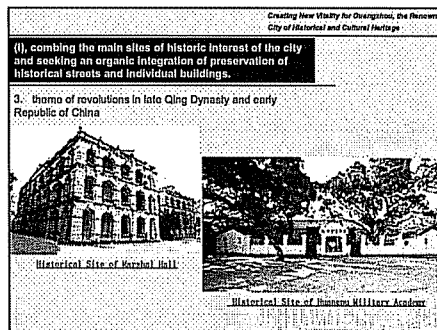


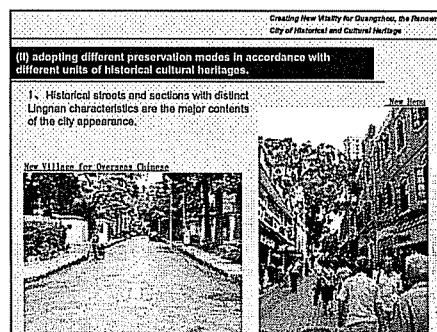


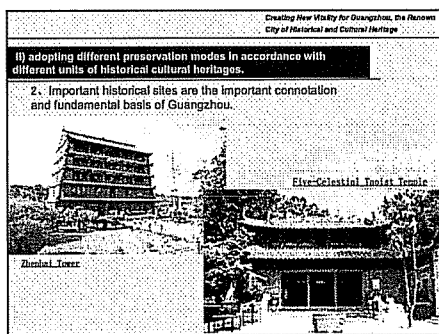


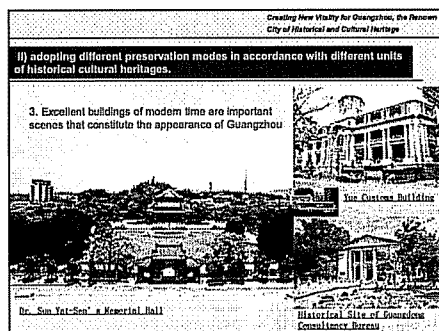


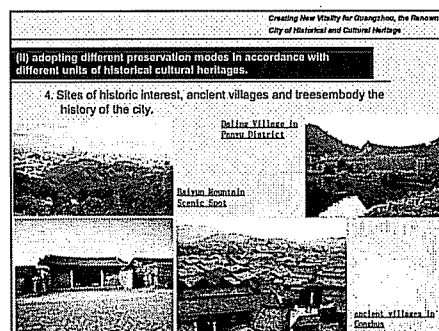













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(III) attaching great importance to the function shift of historical buildings by effectively combining the new functions of modern city with the traditional forms and thus giving new vitality to the historical buildings.

1. 11 layers of road relics built from the Tang Dynasty to the Republic of China were unearthed in the northern section of the road during the renovation project of Beijing Road, the famous pedestrian street.

The thousand-year-old street on Beijing Road after renovation



Excavation Site of the Thousand-year-old Street on Beijing Road

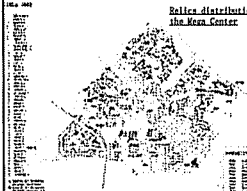


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2. Rich relics at Guangzhou Higher Education Mega Center

Excavated relics & site at the Mega Center



Relics distribution at the Mega Center

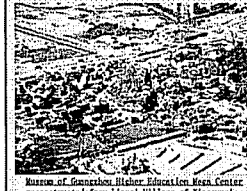


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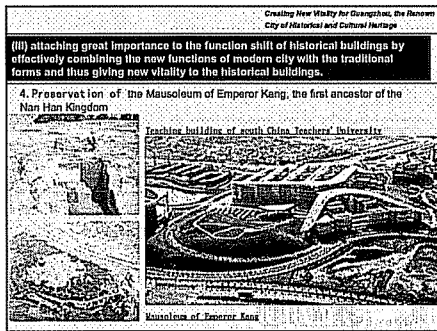
3. Museum of Guangzhou Higher Education Mega Center

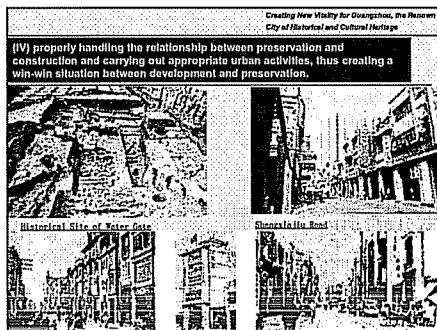
Museum of Guangzhou Higher Education Mega Center

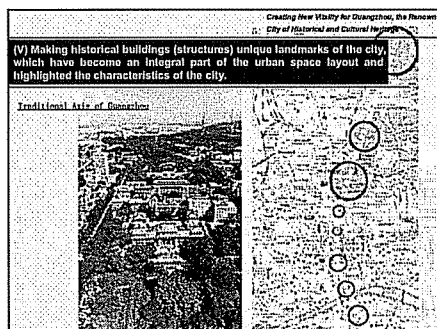


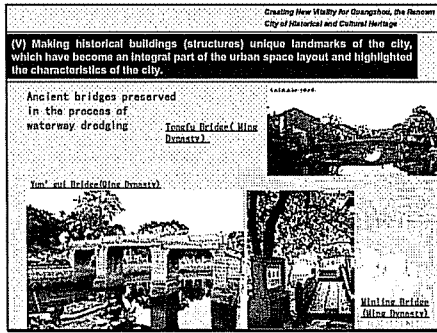
Museum of Guangzhou Higher Education Mega Center reconstructed from Liangzhi Village of Haicang Island

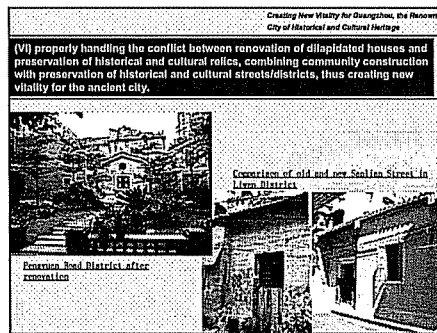


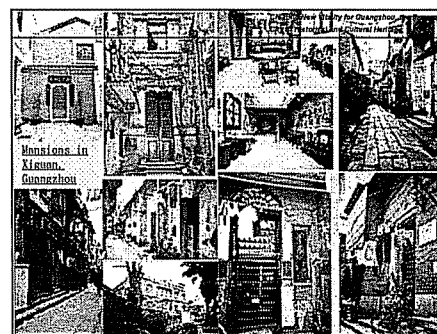












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Concluding Remarks

- combining the main sites of historic interest of the city and seeking an organic integration of preservation of historical streets and individual buildings ;
- adopting different preservation modes in accordance with different units of historical cultural heritages ;
- attaching great importance to the function shift of historical buildings by effectively combining the new functions of modern city with the traditional forms and thus giving new vitality to the historical buildings ;
- properly handling the relationship between preservation and construction and carrying out appropriate urban activities, thus creating a win-win situation between development and preservation ;
- Making historical buildings (structures) unique landmarks of the city, which have become an integral part of the urban space layout and highlighted the characteristics of the city ;
- properly handling the conflict between renovation of dilapidated houses and preservation of historical and cultural relics, combining community construction with preservation of historical and cultural streets/districts, thus creating new vitality for the ancient city ;

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Concluding remarks

The only charm of the past is its past, while the vitality of today lies in its great future.

Our mission is not just to preserve these historical and cultural heritages for preservation's sake, but more importantly, to give these heritages new vigor and vitality in the modern city.