

The Renovation Scheme of Historical and Cultural Blocks in the City

--Taking Yongqing Fang of Guangzhou as an Example

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Abstract: Since 2006, Guangzhou has started the old city renovation work on the Enning Road plot, and the transformation planning has been discussed for more than ten years, it finally changed from "large-scale relocation, large-scale demolition and large-scale construction" to "protection, renewal and utilization", and put forward the urban renewal model of "micro-transformation" in 2016. The renovation was relatively successful, turning Yongqing Fang into a famous scenic spot in Guangzhou and adding huge commercial value. Therefore, the researchers decided to study the value of the "micro-renovation" case of Yongqing Fang in Guangzhou for the renovation plan of historical and cultural blocks in the city. The method of field investigation was adopted in this study. Data and pictures were obtained from field shooting and measurement, as well as some from the official office of Yongqingfang and academic literature. The results show that the "micro transformation" model proposed in the renovation of Yongqing Fang is of innovative significance, which provides a new idea and perspective for the renovation of historical and cultural blocks in the city.

Keywords: Yongqing Fang, urban renovation, historical and cultural blocks, micro transformation

1. Introduction

With the expansion of the city and the transfer of the city center to the new city, the large houses of the wealthy families in Xiguan became dangerous houses over the years, and Enning Road was gradually defeated. Before the renovation, Yongqing Fang was already a forest of dangerous houses, many buildings were "seriously damaged", some had collapsed, the cables under the eaves were interwoven like cobwebs, the community health, fire and other problems were worrying, the traditional culture and folk handicrafts that had flourished in the past were also neglected, and young people had fled. Therefore, the renovation of Yongqing Fang is not only urban renewal, but also the people's livelihood. And the problem of Yongqing Fang also reflects the research blank in this field. In this field, there have been many systematic theoretical theories on the protection and development of historical and cultural blocks, but there is a lack of specific and complete case analysis. Such a case can provide a lot of unique and important information.

This study specifically studied the details of the renovation of Yongqing Fang, studying which parts of the block were demolished, which were rebuilt, which were restored, which were rebuilt, what methods were adopted respectively, the relationship between the renovation plan and its business model, and how to solve the aboriginal problems in the block. From a small perspective, explore the inspiration and contribution of the renovation of Yongqing Fang to the renewal of historical and cultural districts.

2. Transformation process, mode and strategy

2.1. Transformation process

The transformation process of Yongqing Fang is very tortuous, after many times of stagnation before setting the final transformation mode. In 2006, the government planned to promote the renovation plan of the Enning Road area, and launched the "Pilot Plan for the Renovation of Enning Road in Liwan District", which focused on large-scale demolition and construction. In 2007, the renovation project of Yongqing Fang began to be demolished according to the red line, cleared the site, and sold to the market, which was strongly opposed by some citizens, scholars and non-governmental organizations, which triggered a wave of hot discussions on the future of Enning Road shophouses. In 2008, Yongqing neighbors wrote to the National People's Congress to protect their rights, dissatisfied with the demolition compensation program, raised questions about the illegal demolition process, and the compensation standoff led to the demolition of the Enning Road project. In 2009, Liwan District made a planning adjustment according to social opinions, and published the "Enning Road Historical and Cultural Block Protection and Development Planning Plan", and the development idea turned to historical and cultural protection. In 2010, the School of Architecture of South China University of Technology was commissioned by the government to carry out the planning and design of Enning Road, and people from all walks of life participated in the formulation of the "Enning Road Old City Renewal Plan". In 2011, Guangzhou Planning Committee passed the "Enning Road Old City Renewal Plan" [1].

However, from 2011 to 2014, due to low plot ratio, the control of the total amount of construction and the strict requirements of historic district protection, the renewal project of Enning Road could not be profitable, and no developer was willing to take over, resulting in the renewal of Enning Road stagnating again. In 2015, Guangzhou City established the Urban Renewal Bureau, issued the "Guangzhou City Renewal Measures", and proposed to take Enning Road Yongqing Fang as a pilot to promote micro transformation and renewal. Vanke won the bid for the renovation project in the Yongqing Fang area and operated in BOT mode. The government handed over the 15-year operation right to Vanke, which was transformed, constructed and operated by Vanke and returned to the government after the expiration of the 15-year operation period. In 2016, the first phase of Yongqing Fang was officially opened after the renovation was completed. In 2018, Vanke won the second phase of the Yongqing Fang construction project. In 2019, the second phase of the Yongqing Fang Renovation Demonstration Zone was officially opened [2].

2.2. Transformation mode

Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT), in essence, is a way of combining infrastructure investment, construction and operation. On the premise of reaching an agreement between the government and private institutions, the government issues a franchise to the private institutions, allowing them to raise funds to build a certain infrastructure and manage and operate the facility and its corresponding products and services within a certain period of time [3]. The government may set limits on the quantity and price of public goods or services provided by the institution, but ensure that private capital has the opportunity to make a profit.

The risks are shared between the government and the private sector. When the concession period ends, the private organization will transfer the facility to the government department as agreed, and transfer it to the designated government department for operation and management.

For advantages, the BOT model allows the government to build infrastructure projects by attracting private capital, thereby reducing the fiscal burden on the government. This approach can solve the problem of insufficient government funding while transferring project risk to private investors or contractors, and the government does not have to bear all the risk. But for disadvantages, the BOT model usually involves higher financing costs because the project requires a large amount of capital investment, which may lead to a higher return on investment requirement for the project [4]. The project investment is large, the investment cycle is long, and the income is uncertain, which increases the risk of the project. In addition, contract documents for BOT projects are often complex and numerous, involving multiple contracting parties, which increases the difficulty of management and coordination.

2.3. Transformation Strategy

Retain the original texture: The renovation of Yongqing Fang retains the original "one vertical and two horizontal" block pattern, see Figure 1.



Figure 1: Plan of Yongqing Fang

3. Specific transformation plan

3.1. Street correction

In the comprehensive renovation of Yongqing Fang, not only the road surface inside Yongqing Fang has been resurfaced, but also a series of measures have been taken to upgrade the infrastructure of the entire community.

First of all, for the road surface inside Yongqing Fang, the old road surface was removed and repaved. The use of dark gray granite pavement, blind paths and curb stone complement this hue and Lingnan features complement each other. The new pavement design not only provides a beautiful walking environment, but also highlights the historical characteristics and cultural heritage of Yongqing Fang [5].

In addition, a series of improvements have been undertaken to enhance the quality of the entire community. The original interwoven cables under the eaves have been thoroughly sorted and buried underground, making the entire area cleaner and more beautiful. Community sanitation facilities, drainage systems, lighting facilities, fire fighting equipment and communication facilities have also

been comprehensively upgraded and improved, providing residents with a safer and more comfortable living environment.

In addition to the renovation of Yongqing Fang itself, the surrounding roads have also undergone similar changes. Enning Road, Baoyuan Road, Conggui Road, Longjin West Road, Duobao Road, Penglai Road and other roads along the road have also been re-laid with dark gray sidewalk granite, blind road and curb stone, to maintain the original characteristics of Lingnan [6]. The renovation of these roads not only enhances the overall image of the entire Yongqing Fang community, but also provides a more pleasant and convenient transportation environment for residents and visitors.

To sum up, the renovation of Yongqing Fang not only focuses on the resurfacing of the road inside, but also on the infrastructure of the community and the improvement of the surrounding roads. These initiatives not only improve the quality of life of residents, but also make the whole Yongqing Fang a livable and visitable community, showing the unique customs and cultural charm of the Lingnan area.

3.2. Public space construction

The design concept of public space creation focuses on preserving the natural landscape of Lai Chi Wan, making it the highlight of the entire project. Through careful design and planning, Yongqing Fang glows with the historical atmosphere of showy flowers, and restores the city style of the ancient Lingnan area where small bridges and people are built by the water.

In the project planning, in addition to paying attention to the preservation of historical features, it also takes into account the layout of public space and the design of people flow lines. Through rational planning, pleasant inner streets and alleys and external public spaces are formed, providing a comfortable and pleasant environment for residents and visitors.

Natural water systems were also taken into account in the design. The original water body is cleverly integrated into the landscape design, making it part of the public space, and providing a fresh environment and natural atmosphere. The rational planning and management of the water system not only beautify the space, but also provide a place for leisure and entertainment for residents and tourists.

In addition, fire safety is one of the important considerations in the design. In the planning of public spaces, facilities and measures related to fire safety have been fully considered and arranged to ensure the safety of residents and visitors during the event [7].

Overall, the project combines historical features, public spaces, human flow lines, natural water systems and fire safety with landscape design to create a pleasant and beautiful space. The inner streets and outer public spaces become ideal places for people to relax, communicate and appreciate nature. It not only retains the traces of history, but also shows the charm of a modern livable urban environment.

3.3. Building Repair

As part of the renovation project, Vanke numbered each of the 68 buildings in the area and assessed and classified how damaged they were. This evaluation process involves tailor-made micro-modifications for each building to meet the needs of the individual building.

During the renovation process, Vanke focused on re-renovating and solidifying the structure inside the building. The interior of the building has been fully upgraded and improved with the introduction of new supporting facilities. According to the characteristics and needs of different buildings, Vanke adopted a selective transformation strategy of "stay" and "tear down". For example, the renovation of the office space, without changing the external form of the building, creates a spacious and bright effect by opening up the internal walls and using glass structural intervals.

This micro-transformation approach allows each building to be personalised to achieve its full potential and value [8]. Through the redesign and renovation of the interior of the building, Vanke provides residents and users with a space that is more comfortable and adaptable to the needs of modern life.

In general, Vanke's renovation project focuses not only on the maintenance and restoration of the exterior of the building, but also on the renovation and functional upgrading of the interior of the building. By taking into account the building conditions and needs, and tailoring the micro-renovation plan, Vanke strives to make each building a livable and usable space that meets contemporary standards, injecting new vitality and charm into the area [9].

3.4. Facade renovation

In the renovation project, most of the buildings retain the original facade style to strengthen the overall style and characteristics of Lingnan buildings, and retain the spatial texture characteristics of Lingnan traditional residential buildings. However, in order to repair and improve the appearance of the buildings, some have been adjusted in terms of color, lighting and protection.

In the treatment of the exterior facade, most of the building has been replaced with gray bricks to create a unified and primitive atmosphere. This color choice is both in response to the characteristics of Lingnan architecture, and also shows modern elements. In addition, in order to inject some modern feeling, individual buildings are decorated with white metal frame facades and external walls, adding a simple and stylish atmosphere.

In terms of commercial buildings, considering the need for indoor lighting, some commercial buildings have added new types of external bay windows. This design not only provides better natural light to enter the interior, but also gives the building a unique three-dimensional feel [10]. In addition, in order to create a more pleasant living environment, some buildings have also added balcony fences and laid tiles to provide a comfortable outdoor recreation space.

In general, the renovation of Yongqing Fang has repaired and improved the facades of some buildings while retaining the architectural characteristics of Lingnan. Through the use of gray brick, a white metal frame facade and external bay windows, traditional and modern elements are successfully integrated to create a simple and modern architectural style with Lingnan characteristics. These changes not only enhance the overall aesthetics of the building, but also create a more liveable and visitable environment for residents and visitors.

4. Conclusion

This paper examined the renovation scheme of the historical and cultural block of Yongqing Square in Guangzhou, China. The study traced the tortuous transformation process of Yongqing Fang, from the initially proposed large-scale demolition and reconstruction plan to the ultimately adopted "micro-transformation" model. The paper analyzed the key features of the BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) mode utilized in the renovation, highlighting both the advantages and disadvantages of this approach.

The "micro-transformation" strategy employed in the Yongqing Fang renovation proved to be an innovative and significant model. By retaining the original block pattern and texture, upgrading the infrastructure, and integrating commercial and cultural elements, the project was able to revitalize the historical area while preserving its unique character. This approach contrasts with the large-scale demolition and reconstruction methods commonly seen in urban renewal projects, and provides a new perspective for the renovation of other historical and cultural blocks in Guangzhou and beyond.

However, the study also acknowledges certain limitations. The analysis is based primarily on a single case study, and may not be directly applicable to all historical districts. Additionally, the long-term impacts and sustainability of the Yongqing Fang renovation remain to be seen, as the project is

still relatively recent. Future research could expand the scope to include comparative studies of similar renovation projects, as well as longitudinal assessments of the social, economic and cultural outcomes in Yongqing Fang. Such insights could further enrich the understanding of effective approaches to preserving and revitalizing historical urban areas.

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