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Interior Architecture
Exhibition & Narrative Environments
Rhode Island School of Design

Thesis Book
Spring 2020

Getting Closer

Exploring re-contextualization
in exhibition



百万庄
BAIWANZHUANG

GETTING CLOSER

Exploring re-contextualization in exhibition

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Design in interior Studies [Exhibition & Narrative Environments] in the Department of Interior Architecture of the Rhode Island School of Design

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2	Details	
Introduction	3	Renovations and Preservation	
De-contextualization under Globalization		Social Framework Overtime	44
Genius Loci		Resident	
Re-contextualization		Neighborly Relation	
Precedents		Descriptions in Literature	
Existing Site: Baiwanzhuang Community, Beijing		Surrounding Area	
Historical Background	15	Curatorial	51
“Liangchen” Project		Concept and Design	
Location		Precedents	57
Danwei Compound		Exhibition Approach	
Urban Layout	21	Urban Methodology	
Planning and Naming		Program and User Group	59
Residences Layout		Exhibition	61
Functional Space		Exterior Exhibition	63
Changes		Interior Exhibition	77
Influences on Later Chinese Urban Planning		Bibliography	87
Architecture Design in Baiwanzhuang Community	35	Annotated Bibliography	
Structure		Bibliography	
Building Materials		Photo Bibliography	
Interior Layouts			

ABSTRACT

Due to the rise of globalization, the circulation of exhibits born in different cultural backgrounds to alien places all over the world has dramatically increased. Cultural contents are re-contextualized and shaped in a way to adapt to new environments where they lose their essence of place and risk stereotypes of distant cultures. The looming question over every exhibition is how, and to what extent, the original context of the objects on display will be acknowledged or reproduced. Should an effort be made to place pieces in a convincing approximation of their culture of origin? Or should objects be returned to their original setting altogether, rather than displayed in a completely foreign place? In exhibition design, the decision whether to reconstruct the context in the new environment or to return the exhibits to the original context has become central. However, an even greater challenge: if an exhibit inherently contains a complete context, how do you guide the audience to walk into it, understand it and remember it by taking advantage of the original context? The process of curating and displaying culture cannot be disconnected from its site of creation, especially if the object of display is Architecture which by definition embodies the site.

The Baiwanzhuang, a 1950s historical community housing in Beijing which remains within its own context and spatial environment, will be considered as a case study for dealing with the issue of de-contextualization of culture in architectural terms. The goal is to design a "diffuse museum" in situ to exhibit

the urban fabric, the historical architecture, the social framework over time, the contemporary cultural environment, the genius loci of place. Visitors will be guided through a new navigation system in the residential area to explore the highlights of the exhibits in the whole community from the outside, in dialogue with the larger urban fabric, to the inside, revealing private apartments. The contents of the exhibition will also discuss the design and history of the residential area and the residents' lives and livelihood changes over time.

In this thesis, the audience is not only given certain guidance in the process of visiting, but also has the freedom to move through the complex at will. In the process of exploring the site, the audience will slowly encounter this fragmented exhibition. They will interact with the residents in an unpredictable way, and even live in the participatory exhibits. Utilizing the residential area as an urban scale "exhibit," creates a situation where all visitors, residents and stories that happen here become part of one context. Among the whole exhibition, the relationship between visitors and locals will also be a concern. Communication will happen in between through multi aspects for sure, and the intention of creating opportunities of communicating is also a key point in this thesis.

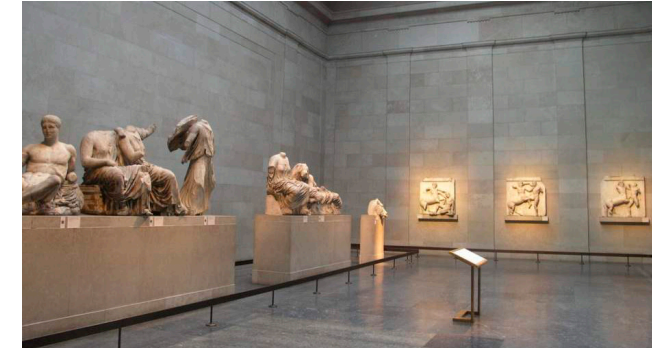
INTRODUCTION

De-contextualization Under Globalization

The development of transportation accelerates the globalization of the world, especially in the field of exhibition. It is true that cultural exchange comes alongside breaking national boundaries, making it easier for people to know new cultures and ideas, but it is also a double-edged sword. In many cases, the exposure to outside cultures is transferred out of its own context, which leads to an intangible deterioration. This deterioration allows only a one-sided sense of the culture rather than a real understanding, leading to different degrees of misunderstanding. This must be viewed as a failure of the goal of exhibition.

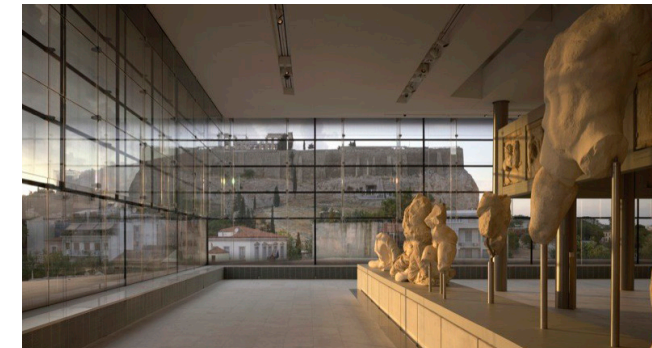
Take art museums as an example: museums all over the world create exhibitions of different contents in a similar way, but is it really the best to display different contents in the same way? Edward Said thought that "All cultures are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic."¹ Following this line of thought, each culture should have its unique modes of display which relates to original context, instead of the standard monotony of placement and explanation, and let visitors misunderstand de-contextualized exhibits. Curators are key in this conversation, as different people may have different ways of interpreting the collection, leading to many different approaches to exhibition practice. We are not the one who created the object, so how can we allow it to speak instead of giving our own voice to it? There is no exact answer, but the only one with a foundation is the story that the object initially possessed.

The museum does a lot of collecting, but for this kind of collecting which does not really care about exhibits' stories but only the quantity of their collections, Sharon Macdonald thinks that "it naturalizes the museum, picture it as an inevitable expression of the collecting urge rather than seeking to understand its various manifestations and flourishing in specific historical and cultural contexts."² Modern museums often use current techniques to display their collections, which in effect add new content to the exhibits, regardless of inner qualities of the objects being displayed. We can't say that this is a



British Museum

New Acropolis Museum



totally bad thing, but as a place with the function of preserving collections and in charge of public education, museums have an obligation to deliver exhibits to the public objectively and with a degree of realism to the culture of the objects. Preserving collections cannot be understood in a narrow sense as only preserving materiality but ignoring spirituality, all aspects surrounding the history of objects should be considered.

It is particularly important to focus on traditional cultures that include a plenty of internal wisdom and spirit, which are the most representative but also the most difficult contents to be recognized. Traditional culture often produces many restrictive factors because of its conservatism, which is its problem. "The mistake of modernity was to interpret signs of tradition in the culture as a conservatism and hold to 'progress'."³ In the process of globalization, how to keep the essence of traditional culture in its original context under the premise and fully shown to the world in a respectful way is the problem that we should continue to explore.

Under globalization, the number of international exhibitions increases each year. In recent years, more and more developing countries have started to hold different types of biennales, which are similar to the western world (e.g. Venice Biennale). However, many times, they are just imitating the exhibition approach of the Western world because of their consciousness of regarding it as the mainstream idea, rather than integrating it into their own context and forming their own style. Therefore, it is better to rethink the meaning and value of context in an exhibition than to follow the "mainstream" exhibition mode and fail to show its own characteristics.

Genius Loci

In the book *Genius loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, Christian Norberg-Schulz refers to the interpretation of the word *Genius Loci*: "*Genius loci* is a Roman concept. According to ancient Roman belief every 'independent' being has its *Genius*, its guardian spirit... To protect and conserve the *genius loci* in fact means to concretize its essence in ever new historical contexts."⁴ This definition is often used in landscape architecture as an important principle that plays a crucial role in design. "The *genius loci* becomes manifest as location, general spatial configuration and characterizing articulation. As they are the objects of man's orientation and identification."⁵ The concept of *genius loci* is introduced here because it can better help us understand context.

In the context of modern architectural theory, *genius loci* is understood as a branch of phenomenology in philosophy. The reason is that in the methodology of phenomenology, people believe that they should describe and analyze the formation process of ideas by returning to the original conscious phenomenon, so as to obtain explicit evidence of the prescriptive reality of ideas. The phenomenon of primitive consciousness here can be popularly understood as a kind of primitive context, through the cognition of context, we can get the definition of things. *Genius loci* can also be understood as a kind of soul, an invisible spiritual pillar. Although it is not widely used in every field, the truth is that everything should have its own *genius loci*, however, because *genius loci* exists in different ways so that people are not aware of it. People can distinguish and identify differences according to the *genius loci* hidden behind things. Once the *genius loci* disappears, we will lose the correct judgment on the attributes of exhibits.

In the exhibition field, the definition of *genius loci* also applies. Walter Benjamin lays bare the tension inherent in an object's meaning. "On the one hand, the object's original 'fabric of tradition'—that is, both its primary context and its originally intended audience—remains essential to its significance. On the other hand, the art work's aura prevails in spite of its accessibility

and proximity in a decontextualized museum exhibition."⁶ As mentioned in the previous article, if the exhibit is taken out of the original context, which is the environment including its *genius loci*, people's cognition of it will become vague and even misunderstood. The reality, however, is that the development of individual and social identities is a slow process that cannot occur in a constantly changing environment. "We have every reason to believe that the human alienation so common today, to a high amount is due to the scarce possibilities of orientation and identification offered by the modern environment."⁷ Because of our lack of understanding on *genius loci*, we even gradually blurred understanding of ourselves. Therefore, keeping the *genius loci* of places and things is crucial in the design.

Genius loci is the hidden and unchanging essence of places and things, but that doesn't mean the way we use *genius loci* is unchanging as well. We should not forget the "root", namely their *genius loci*, but at the same time follow the development of the time and technological progress, and integrate *genius loci* into the new environment, which is similar to the previous discussion on how to inherit and spread traditional culture. *Genius loci* should be a tool that allows us to make features rather than an obstacle that prevents us from moving forward. "To respect the *genius loci* does not mean to copy old models. It means to determine the identity of the place and to interpret it in ever new ways."⁸

Philadelphia Museum of Art



Re-contextualization

"Museums decontextualize their collections. They must also re-contextualize them. The challenge is to collect enough of the old context with the object so that it does not lose the stories it tells of its weight this life; but also to connect to new ideas and taxonomies, to find new contexts that allow new uses."⁹ Steven Lubar, a professor at Brown University, points this out in his article *Museums Need Collections and Connections*. "Collecting... Naturalizes the museum... Picture it as an inevitable expression of the collecting urge rather than seeking to understand its various manifestations and flourishing in specific historical and cultural contexts."¹⁰ Indeed, as we said before, the present situation of museum exhibition is mostly divorced from the context of the exhibits, which makes the exhibition form monotonous. To change the status, it is necessary to reconnect the exhibits with their own context, which can be restored in various ways. Here, Lubar puts forward one of the methods, which is to take the exhibits with the same or similar context from the existing collection and reorganize them according to the original context, so as to create context in the new environment. Philadelphia Museum of Arts uses this technique in its exhibitions of Asian art and European art from the Medieval to the early Renaissance.

After restoring the context, it is equally important to use the power of context to establish a new connection with the alien environment, which can also be a connection with the visitor. Bernard Tschumi's architectural project, the New Acropolis Museum, is a case in point. When the new environment becomes the link between the exhibit and the context, the results are still striking. However, this approach is more challenging than creating context in the new environment, because the exhibits have been consciously removed from the context, if the new connection is not established properly, the exhibits and the context will all be severely damaged, and the connection in between will lose its most value as well.

If we change our vision to a larger perspective, we can get new methods to think about the context with architecture, landscape and urban planning as

Convent de La Tourette



exhibits. If ordinary objects need a larger environment to describe their context, then architecture itself can provide context they need, because architecture is a permanent product that cannot be carried away, so it cannot be separated from the place where it was first created. This is the most interesting part of architecture under the topic of context. Nonetheless, if the place is not used by people, the context is not completed, because it loses the most important part, that is the activation of the core connotation of the place by people's engagement.

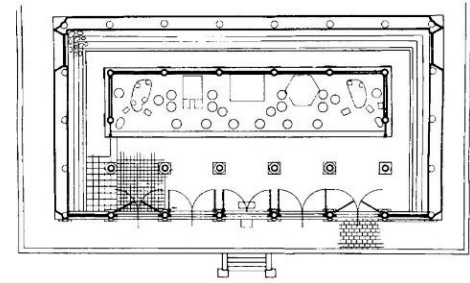
Whether it is architecture or larger scale, their ultimate purpose is for humans, so people become a very important part here. In order for the context of a place to become complete, people must participate in the use of space. As a world heritage site, the Convent of La Tourette is a case with reference value in this aspect. It can not be defined as a regular exhibition, because it isn't showing anything, but just serving as a container of context, waiting for visitors to experience the essence of the design expressed by the architect through their actual participation.

Implementation in the exhibition of re-contextualization has already been a lot, but as a research topic, what I want to explore is an absolute re-contextualization practice. Exhibits and context are inseparable, any side cannot exist without the other side.

Through the discussion above, I think architecture and urban existence as topics of an exhibit, at the same time, becoming the role of exhibition space, will be more suitable for study. Combinative myself to the familiarity of different context, the importance of the site and more factors, I chose Baiwanzhuang community in Beijing based on my own cultural background in relation to this subject and try to finish an exhibition that relates to re-contextualization within this historical area which was built in 1950s. This book presents an analysis of the site (as well as the exhibits) from a variety of perspectives, as well as the design concept and orientation of the exhibition, before going into the specific design.

Precedents

1. In Situ Recovery



Plan of Nanchansi main hall
Wutai Mountain, Shanxi



Plan of the gallery
Philadelphia Museum of Art

Philadelphia Museum of Art

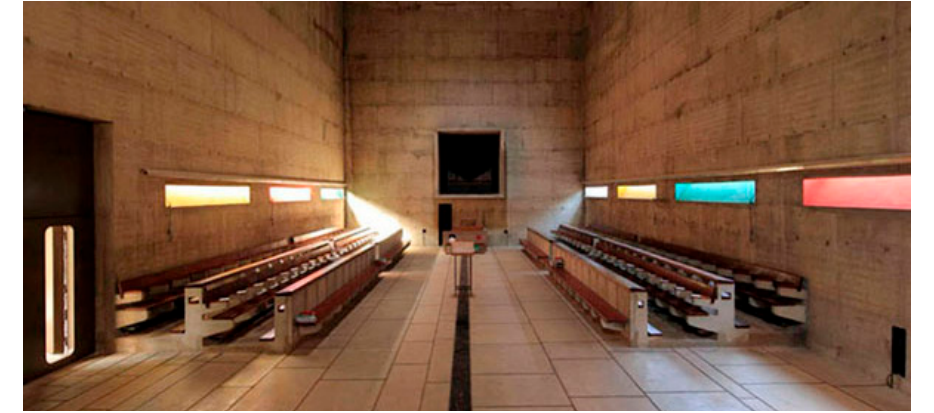
Philadelphia, USA

In the Philadelphia Museum of Arts, exhibitions of Asian and European historical buildings and cultural relics can be said as a very valuable learning case of the re-contextualization in museum exhibition. Using the gallery which preserve the coffered ceiling of Zhihuasi (Temple of Transforming Wisdom), a buddhist temple in the Ming dynasty of China, as an example. First, the gallery restored the original height of the exhibits and the original location in Zhihuasi, including the same internal space and scale between the gallery and the main hall of Chinese buddhist temple. In addition, the lighting effect in the gallery also consciously imitates the lighting effect in the real temple. Secondly, in order to better convey the context of the main hall of the buddhist temple, the Chinese buddhas in the collection are placed in the same place as the traditional buddhas in the temple, which makes all the collections work together in the same space to create the most authentic context for each other, making all the narratives logical and clear.



Precedents

2. Go into the Context



Sainte Marie de la Tourette

Lyon, France
Le Corbusier

"Sainte Marie de La Tourette is a Dominican Order priory, located on a hillside near Lyon, France designed by the architect Le Corbusier, the architect's final and most important building. The primary duty of the monastery should be the spiritual awakening of the people and in particular the inhabitants of nearby areas."¹¹

Today, the convent of la tourette is a world heritage site that still retains its original function. In addition to the usual architectural guided tours, there are also accommodations and religious services that can be provided by advanced reservation. As an architectural design that focuses on these two functions, the essence and wisdom of Corbusier's design can be truly realized only when we enter into the context of monastery architecture and turns ourselves into a part of the context to truly live and use the space. This is also the power of entering the context, and it doesn't matter with time pass.



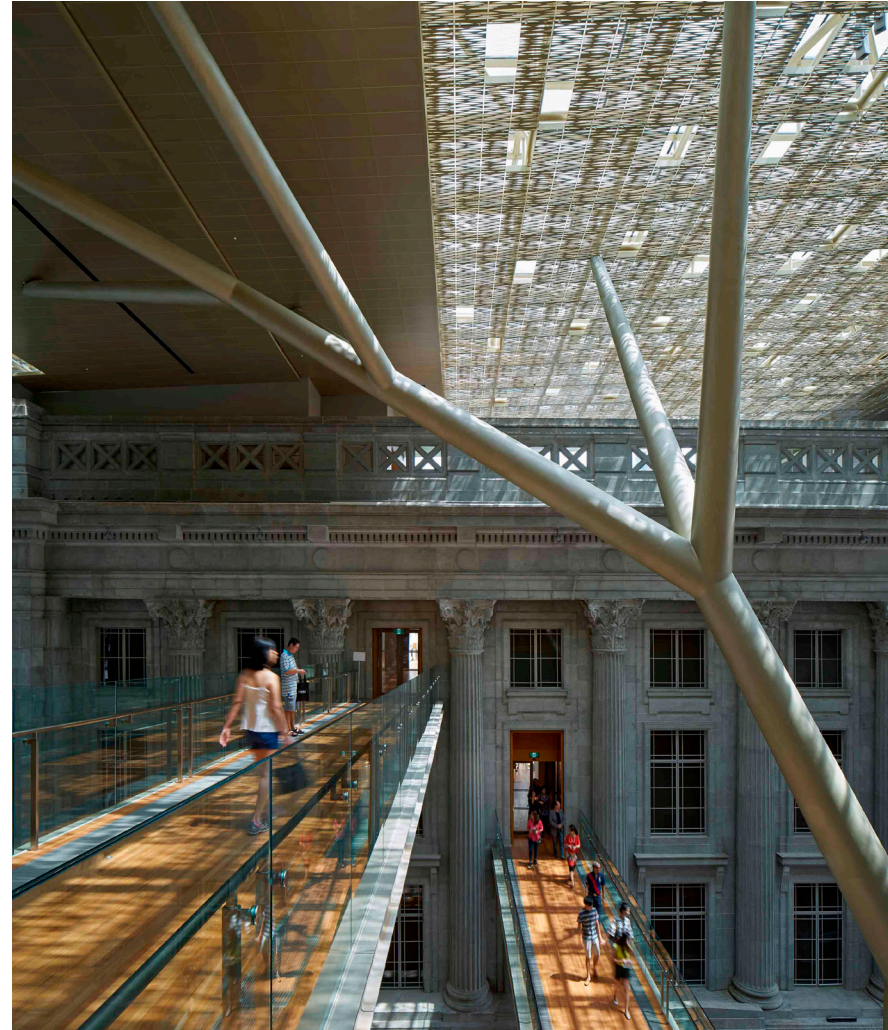
Precedents

3. Context Transmission

National Gallery Singapore

Singapore
StudioMilou

Studiosmilou's design in the National Gallery Singapore also give an inspiration in the topic of re-contextualization. Buildings used by the museum are the former city hall and the supreme court. The two colonial products in Asian countries which were built in the western architectural and decorative style, coinciding with the context of the exhibits inside of ti. Taking advantage of this "shared context", the designer inserted a new space in the middle of the two buildings so that they are connected, forming a whole and enhance the contextual communication between each other. This approach also included the two buildings themselves in the "interior" of the museum, making them part of the exhibition as well as the exhibition space.



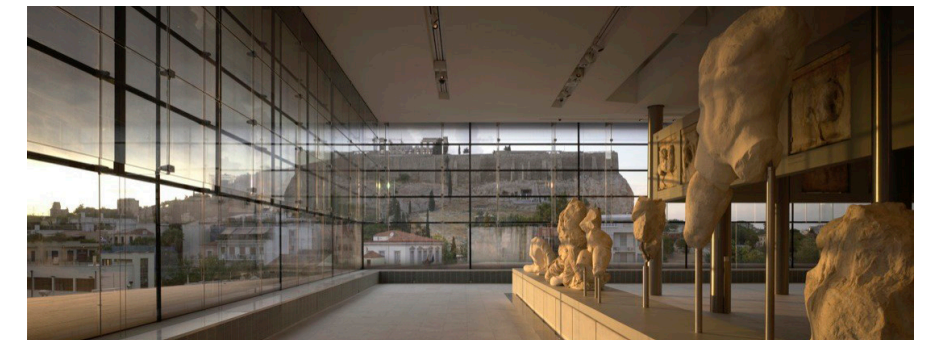
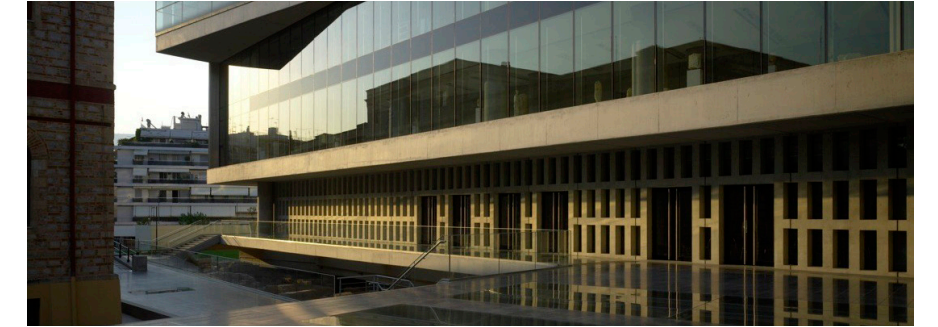
Precedents

4. Context Transmission under the Preservation

New Acropolis Museum

Athens, Greece
Bernard Tschumi

When the New Acropolis Museum discusses the topic of context, it raises the question of how to bring context into the exhibition while preservation of historical exhibits is needed? In fact, in many cases, the exhibits have to be transferred due to the need for better preservation environment. However, Tschumi's strategy is to create a new place next to the original context, which can co-exist with the original context in the eyes of visitors, so the exhibits are not completely separated from the context. At certain moments, the glass facade of the new environment reflects the original context, co-existing again in a new way with the exhibits within the building.

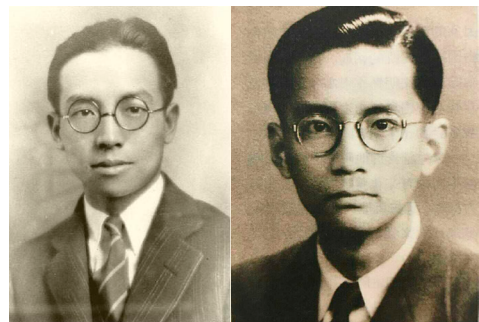


Existing Site

Baiwanzhuang Community, Beijing, China

Historical Background

1. "Liangchen" Project



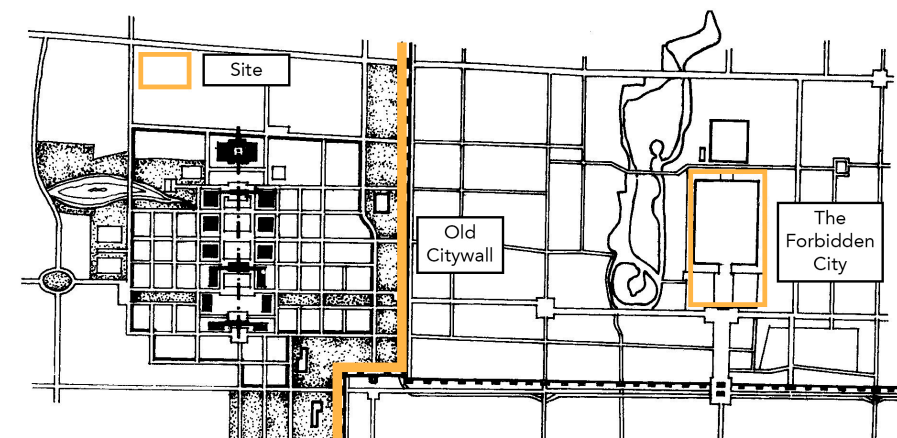
梁思成 (Left)
Liang Sicheng (1901 – 1972)
Chinese architect and architectural historian.
The father of modern Chinese architecture.

陈占祥 (Right)
Chen Chan-siang (1916 - 2001)
Chinese Urban planner and architect.

“早日决定首都行政中心区所在地，并请考虑按实际的要求，和在发展上有利条件，展拓旧城与西郊新市区之间地区建立新中心，并配合目前财政状况逐步建造。”

"Deciding on the location of the administrative center of the capital as soon as possible, and considering to expand the area between the old city and the new urban area in the western suburbs for building a new center in line with the current financial situation according to actual requirements and favorable development conditions."

《关于中央政府行政中心区位置的建议》，1950
Proposals on the location of the central administrative district



Historical Background

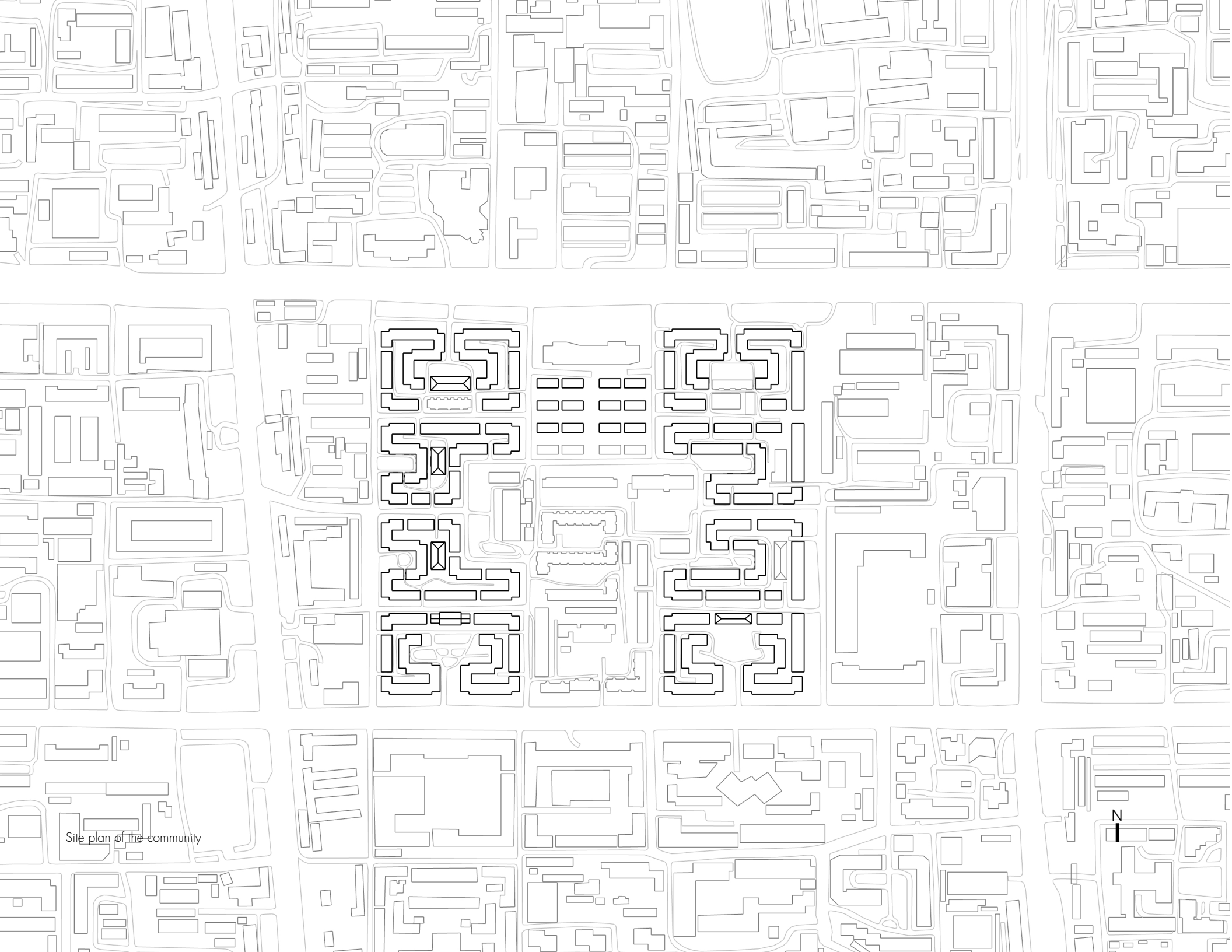
2. Location



百万坟 Baiwanfen
The site is located in the northwest of Xicheng District of Beijing, formerly was the wasteland of the western suburbs of Beijing where used to be a graveyard, people called it "Baiwanfen"(a graveyard of millions).

白庄子 Baizhuangzi
Later, people who fled the desert built their homes here, forming a small village, which was called "Baizhuangzi" by urban residents.

百万庄 Baiwanzhuang
After liberation, "Baiwanzhuang" placed the original place name.



Historical Background

3. Danwei Compound

"Danwei" is the simplified name of the working unit. Danwei compound is a specific product of China's socialist public ownership system. It mainly refers to the planning and organization form of housing, school, business and supporting facilities developed by the state or government office under the influence of the Soviet Union in the early days after the founding of the People's Republic of China. This kind of unit is decorated according to "Good for working, Making life convenient, Living nerby" principle, distribute more in the suburb area, expand outwards from old city edge. At that time, it embodied the important concept of "balance between occupation and housing".

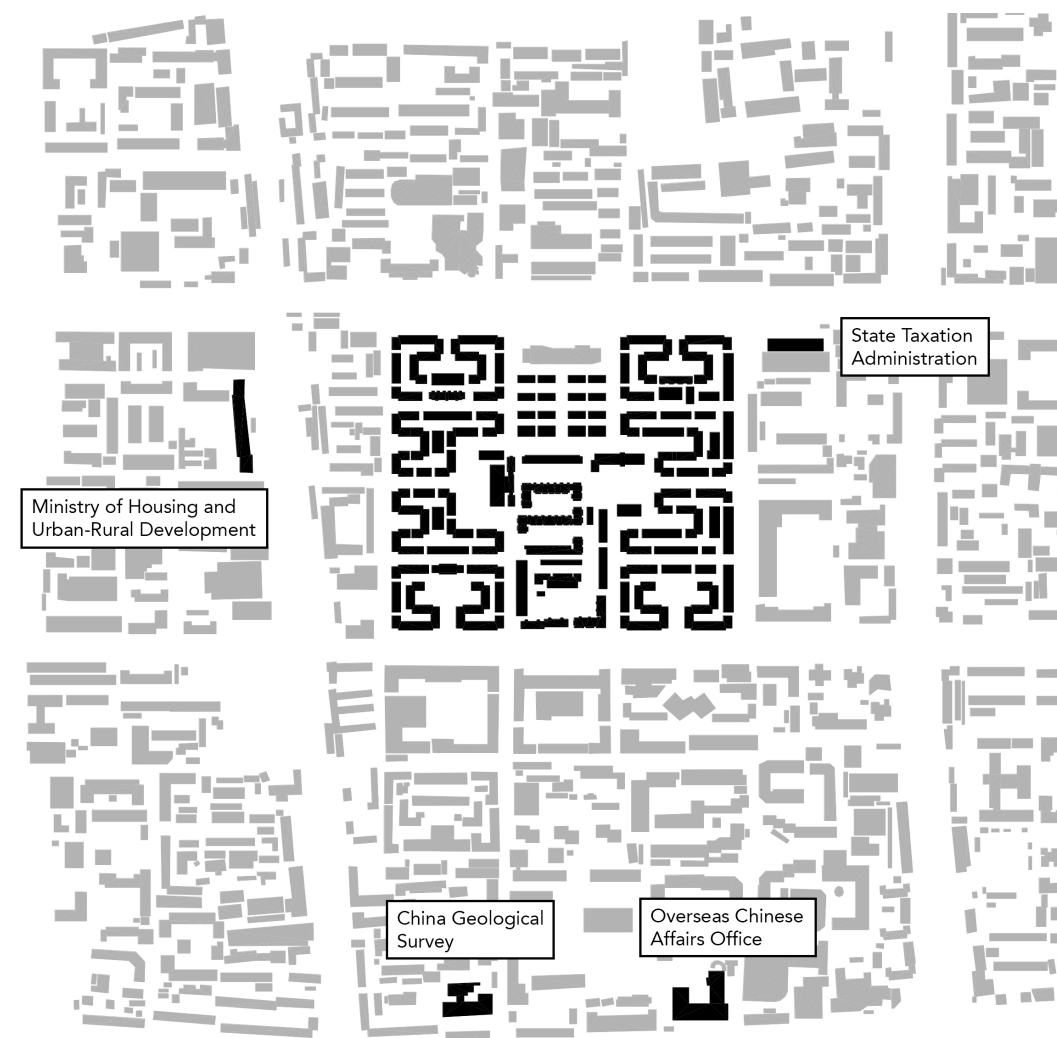


Location of the unit, 1950s



Location of the unit, 2010s

Baiwanzhuang Community and government office nearby



Urban Layout

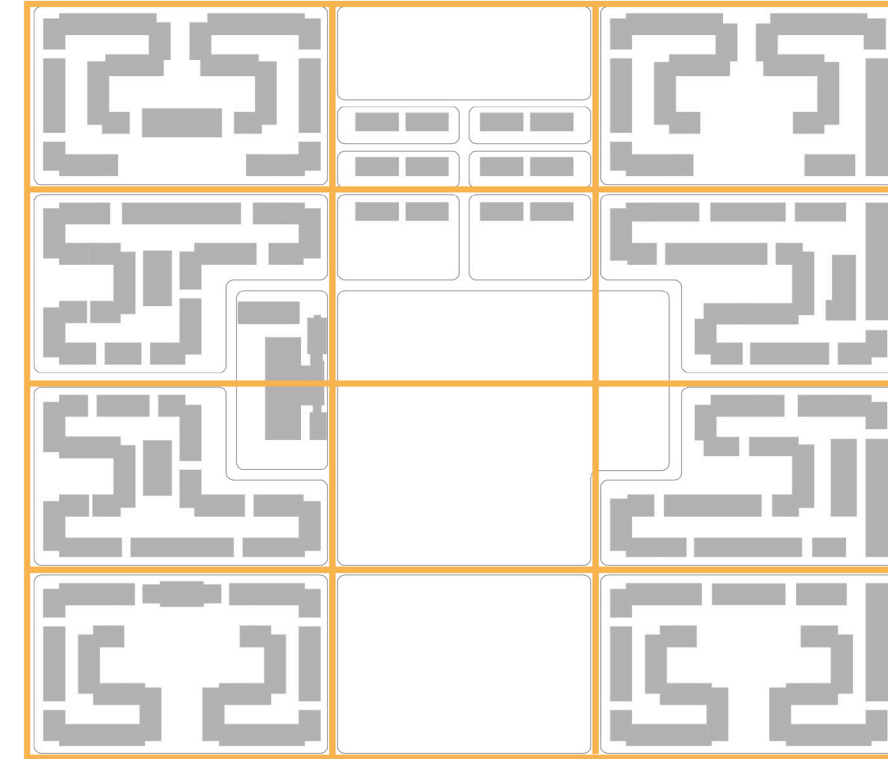
1. Planning and Naming

Form-order

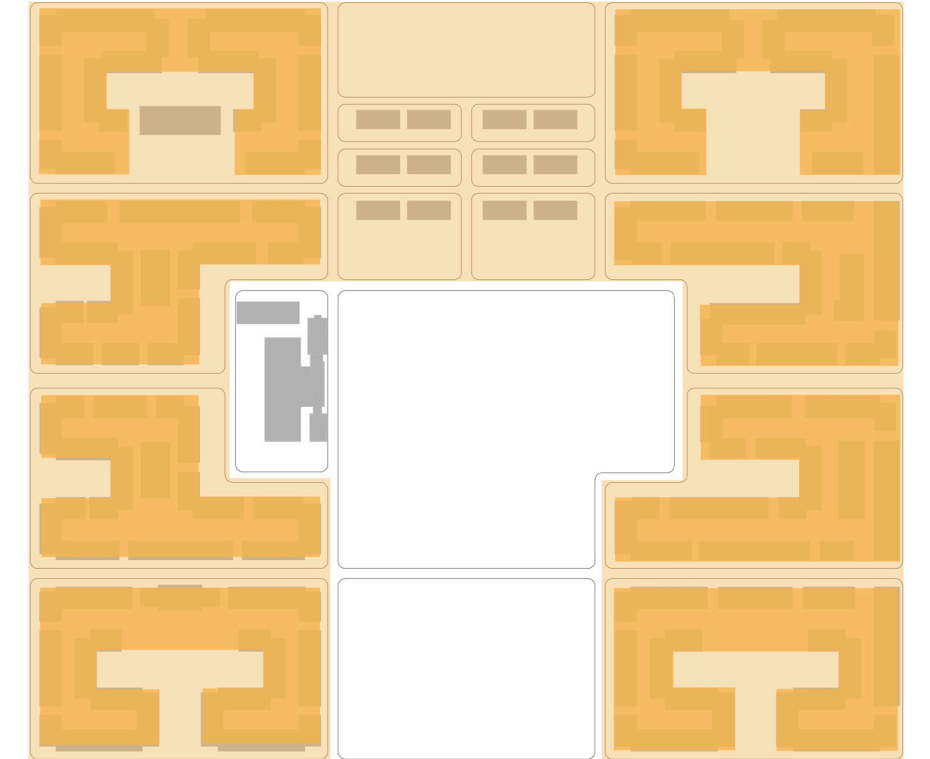
“我们要使居住的环境有促进居民文化水准的力量。我们必须注意到物质环境对于居民道德精神的影响。……我们计划建立市镇时，务需将每一座房屋与每一个‘邻舍’间建立善美的关系，我们必须建立市镇体系上的‘形式秩序’ (Form-order)。在善美又规则的形式秩序中，自然容易维持善美的‘社会秩序’。这两者有极强的相互影响力。”

"We should make the living environment have the power to promote the cultural level of the residents. We must pay attention to the influence of material environment on residents' moral spirit. ... When we plan to build a town, we must establish a good relationship between each house and each 'neighbor'. We must establish a 'form-order' to the city system. In a good and regular form-order, it is naturally easy to maintain a good 'social order'. The two have a strong mutual influence."

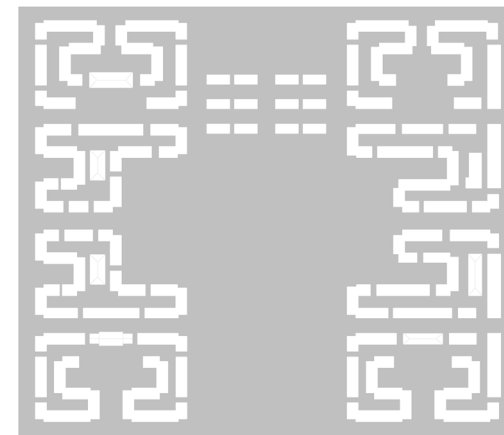
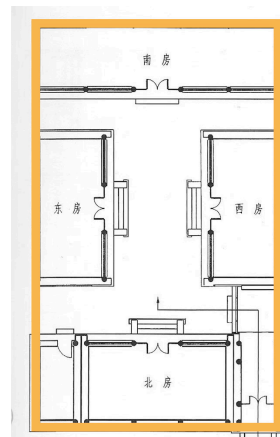
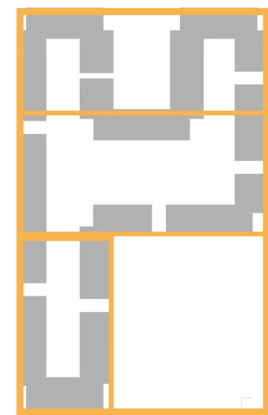
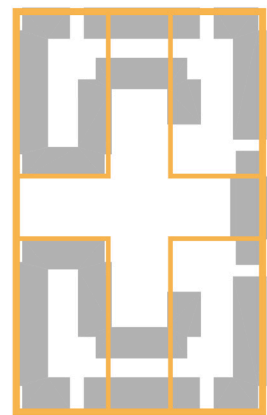
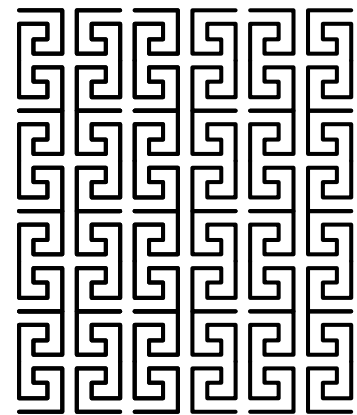
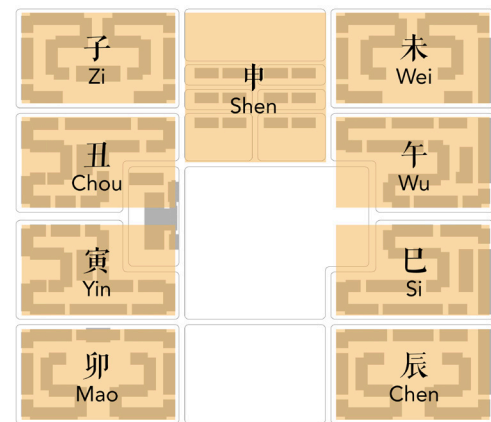
梁思成《市镇的体系秩序》，1945
Liang Sicheng, The institutional order of the city



Dividing into grid, creating blocks, and then insert functions into the grid. There are three horizontal lines across the East and West, roughly separating into four equal parts; Vertical lines across North and South roughly separating into two equal parts. Lines become roads later and create 12 blocks.

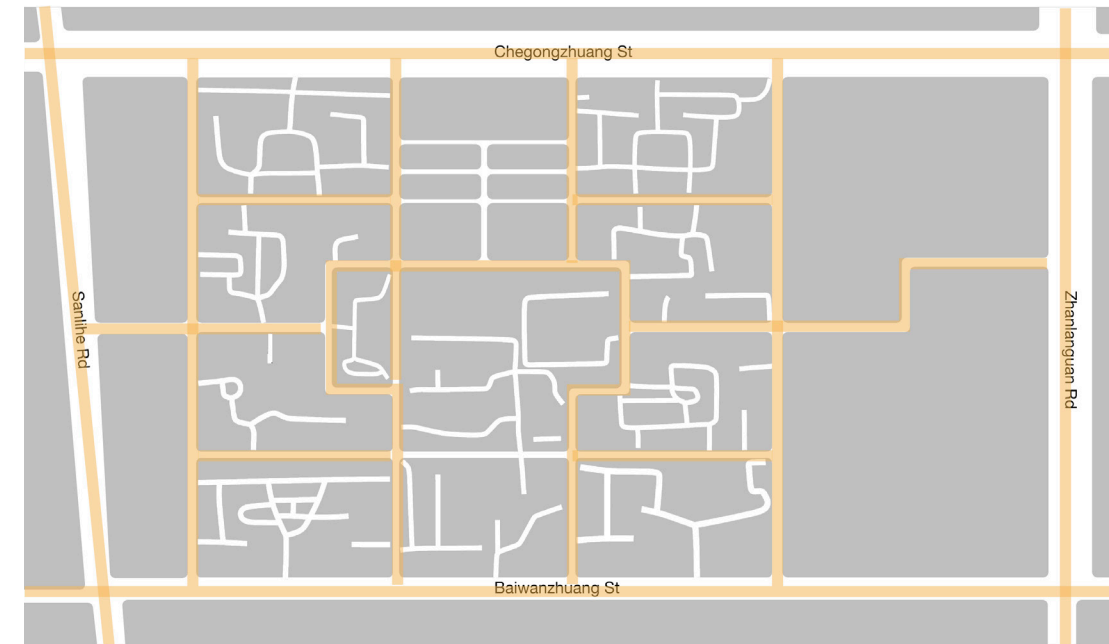


The layout mostly adopts peripheral type and double peripheral type, enclosing a complete street and hierarchical public space. Public green space and service facilities are arranged in the community center to form an introverted square and service radius. It shows symmetry, enclosure and introversion. Peripheral layout improves the building density and highly saves land.



For Vehicle
 For Pedestrian

N



Road

Every house has a few passages, both as fire access, and in line with feng shui characteristics. At the planning level of road system, it follows the design principle of "not smooth but accessible", without walls and residential gates. Grid dislocation makes the community road not to go all the way, also it is conducive to reduce vehicles' speed.

Residential layout design inspired from the traditional Chinese pattern "Huiwen". Using unique Sexagenary cycle as naming method and divide the whole community into nine areas of "Zi Chou Yin Mao Chen Si Wu Wei Shen". Central greens is the axis, Zi Chou Yin Mao on the west side, Chen Si Wu Wei on the east side, along the counterclockwise line on both sides of the central greens. The central position on the north side of the central greens is the Shen area where ministerial-level leaders live.

天干地支 Sexagenary cycle

The sexagenary cycle, also known as the Stems-and-Branches or ganzhi, is a cycle of sixty terms, each corresponding to one year, thus a total of sixty years for one cycle, used for reckoning time in China and the rest of the East Asian cultural sphere.¹²

The square shape of the residential area is very similar to the siheyuan, the space proportion of the courtyard is basically close to the traditional siheyuan, full of residential characteristics.

四合院 Siheyuan

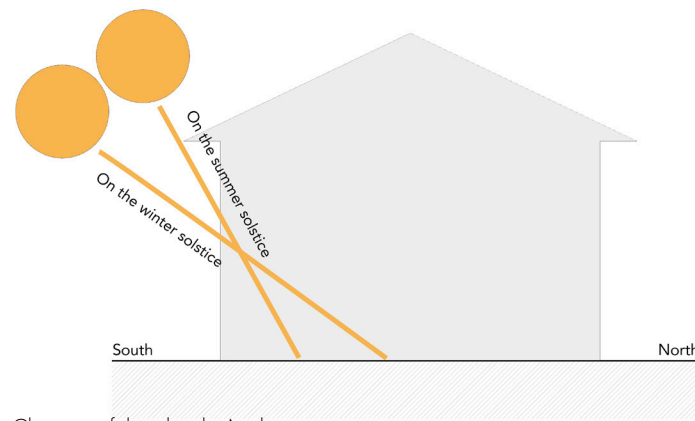
A siheyuan is a historical type of residence that was commonly found throughout China, most famously in Beijing and rural Shanxi. The siheyuan composition was the basic pattern used for residences, palaces, temples, monasteries, family businesses, and government offices.¹³

Urban Layout

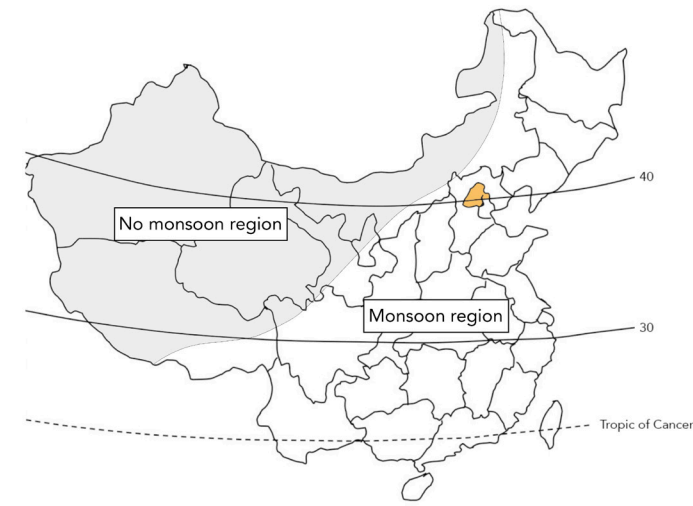
2. Residence Layout



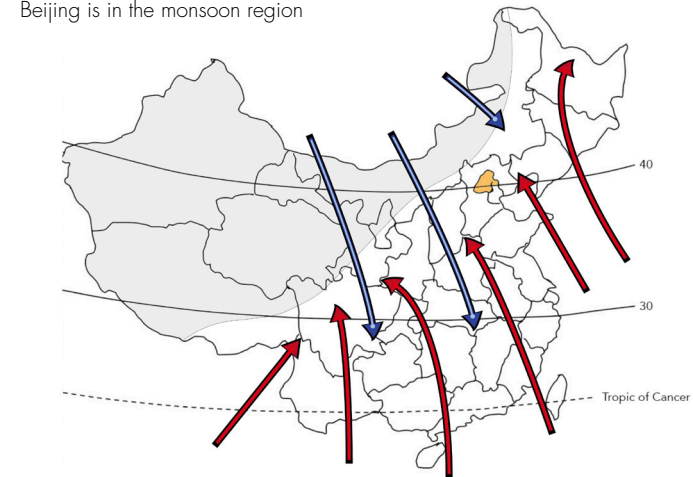
Latitude of Beijing



Changes of the altitude Angle at noon



Beijing is in the monsoon region



Summer monsoon comes from the southeast
Winter monsoon comes from the northwest

Follow the Climate

Most apartments in Beijing are backing on north and facing to south because of the climate.

-The Influence of Sunlight

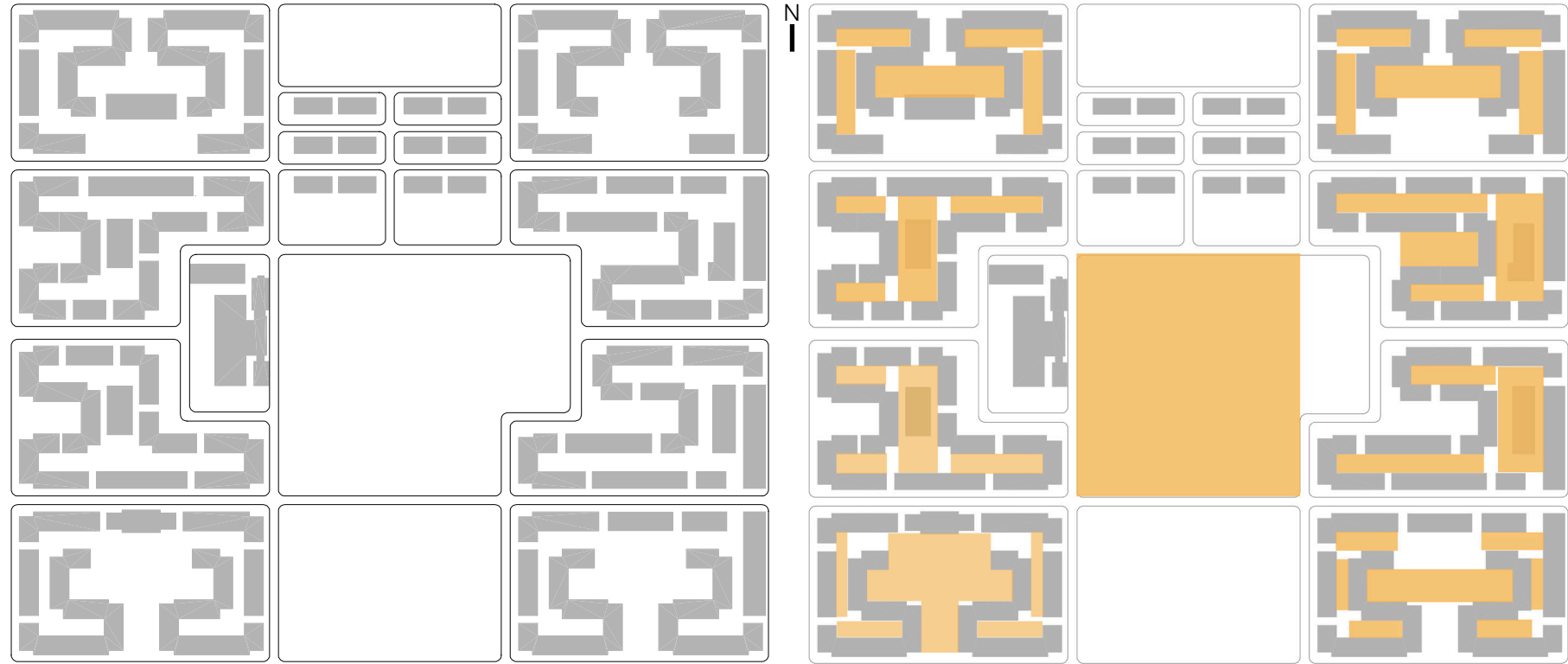
Beijing is located in the north of the tropic of cancer, apartments backing on north and facing to south can directly receive the sunlight and bring in good lighting condition; also there will be no vertical sunlight exposure into the room when the Angle of solar height is high at noon.

- The Influence of Monsoon

Beijing is affected by summer monsoon from southeast and winter monsoon from northwest. Apartments backing on north and facing to south could make the interior cool during the summer and warm during the winter.

The layout of the house is designed as a circular pattern to increase the north-south orientation and reduce the east-west orientation

Residence and Courtyard

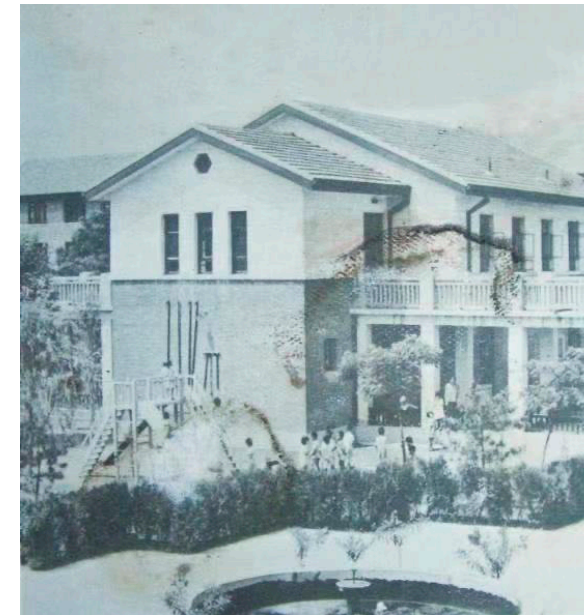


Small units group together

Courtyards

The layout of the house in the form of Huiwen pattern enables the formation of independent and interconnected small units within the community. In a small unit structure, the road and view are not obstructed. The group is open design, no obvious walls, only roads being as the natural division.

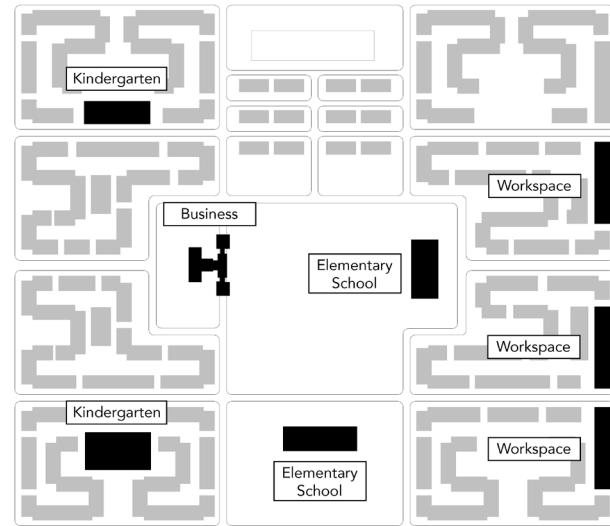
The building is arranged along the road, enclosing an appropriate scale of internal courtyard. Several courtyards are both relatively independent and integrated with each other in the overall space. The surrounding buildings form semi-private spaces, with each courtyard, forming its own zone, quiet and safe.



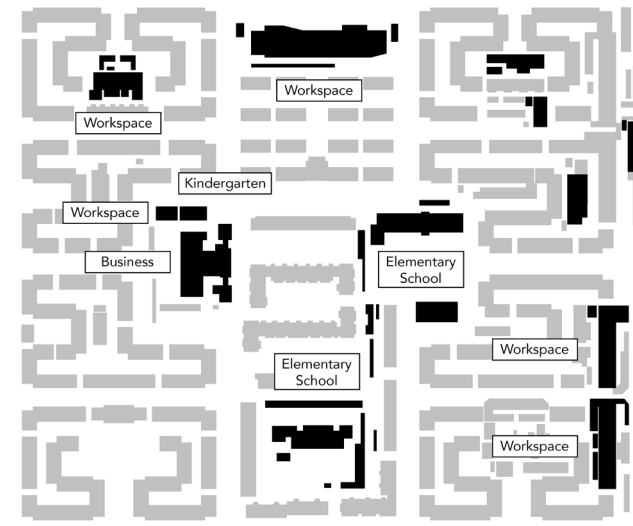
- 1 2
- 3 4
- 1. Top view of the community
- 2. Exterior view of the community
- 3. Kindergarten
- 4. Top view of the community

Urban Layout

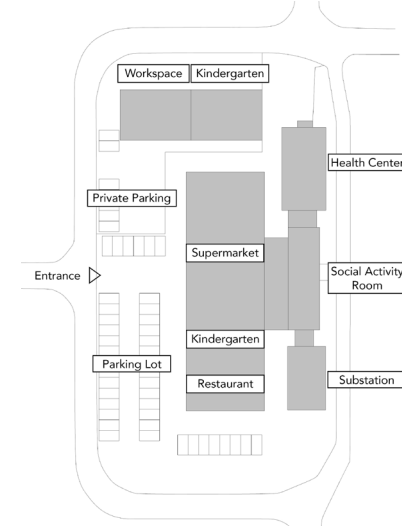
3. Functional Space



Old functional space, 1950s



New functional space, 2010s



Zoom-in to the business area

In addition to residential areas, greens and courtyards, the infrastructure within the community is built within or around the community. There are three schools in the community. Zhanlan Road No.1 Primary School is the largest and the one that has been preserved so far. It has become a key primary school in Xicheng District.

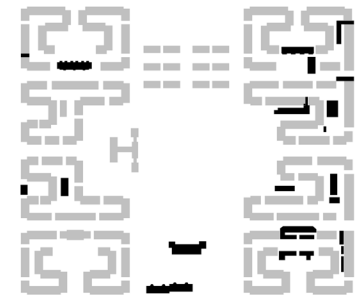
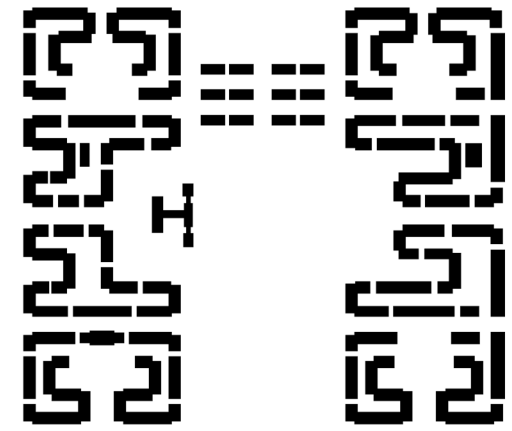
The two southernmost blocks in the central area are reserved for subsequent construction. The northernmost block houses an office building along the street, creating a facade and a barrier.



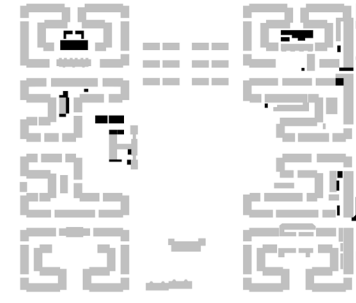
Urban Layout

4. Changes

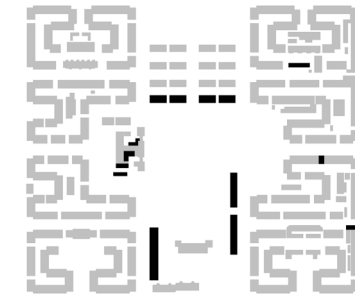
N
|



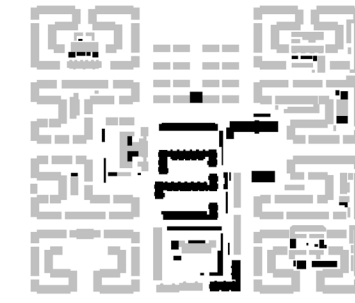
1956-1965



1965-1979



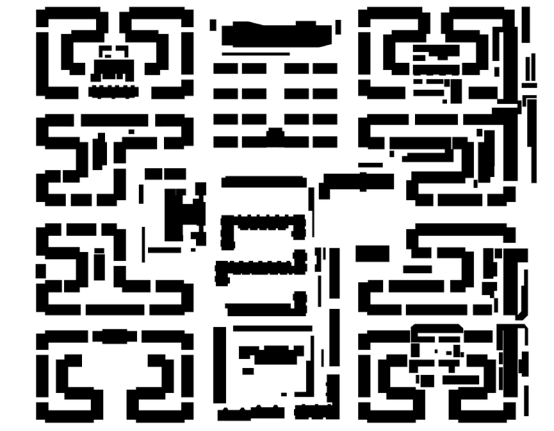
1979-1991



1991-2004



2004-Now



2019

The three-level public space system of "plaza-street-courtyard" was destroyed.

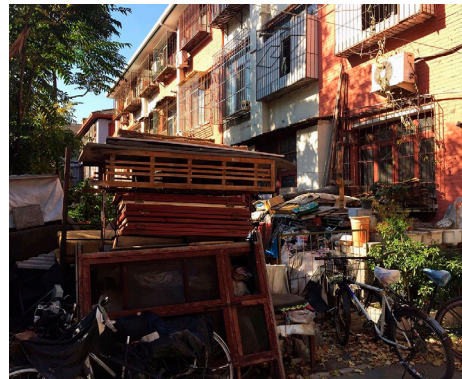
1956

In the 1960s, self-built dormitories began to occupy the center of the group.

1976 Tangshan Earthquake

After the earthquake, the phenomenon of private construction is prevalent.

Commercial housing start to be built in the 1980s and 1990s

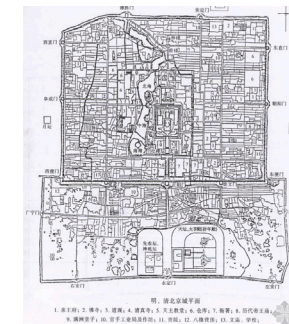
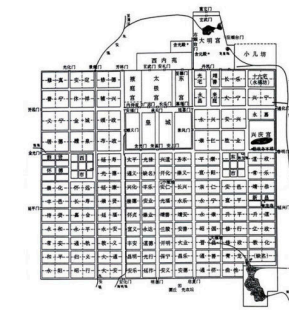


Photos of the current situation

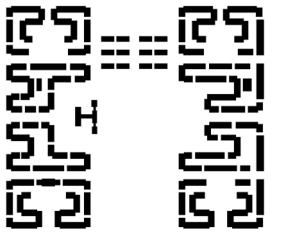
Urban Layout

5. Influences on Urban Planning

- BC 770
Li Fang system basically formed in the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period, the period from the Western Han dynasty to the Tang dynasty was the peak of development.
- 1040
After the middle period of the Northern Song dynasty, Jie Xiang system was used to adapt to the new social and economic conditions and the change of urban life style.
- 1370
After Yuan dynasty, the original lane was changed into hutong, forming a three-level organizational structure of the main street - hutong - siheyuan, and courtyard houses in the hutong were built in parallel.
- 1910s
Street - lane - li forms the three levels of the composition. Street is the urban road, street on both sides of the branch is lane without motor vehicles, lane on both sides of the branch is li, generally is the end road.



- 1950s
China implemented the system of "unified investment, unified land acquisition, unified planning, unified construction and unified management" in the construction of residential areas, which promoted the formation of new residential areas with streets, groups and complete facilities.
- 1949-1979
The two-level structure pattern of residential area - residential group is formed, which makes the residential area have Chinese characteristics.
- 1980s
Some cities have carried out comprehensive district planning, such as factory - comprehensive living area, administrative office - comprehensive living area, commercial - comprehensive living area.
- 1998
About 350 million square meters of urban housing were built, seven times the amount built in the 30 years before the founding of new China.



Architecture Design

1. Structure

Low-rise residential (2-4F) which guarantees each household for daylight. All buildings are in typical Soviet architectural style with inclined housetop. Shen district adopts the form of two-storey row roof building. All buildings are using brick-concrete structure, the roof is made of bamboo or wood strips that covered by clay on top of it and then cover with on tiles on top for waterproof. After the earthquake in 1976, a new concrete structural frames were built out of the original brick structure for preservation purpose.

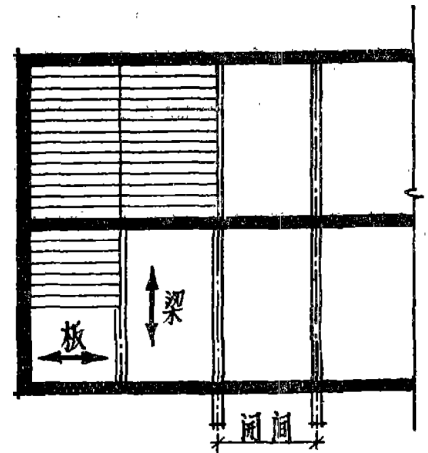
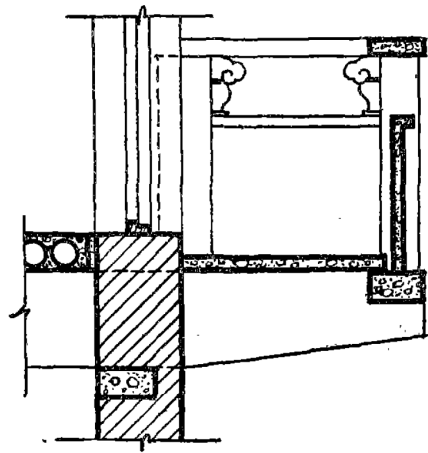
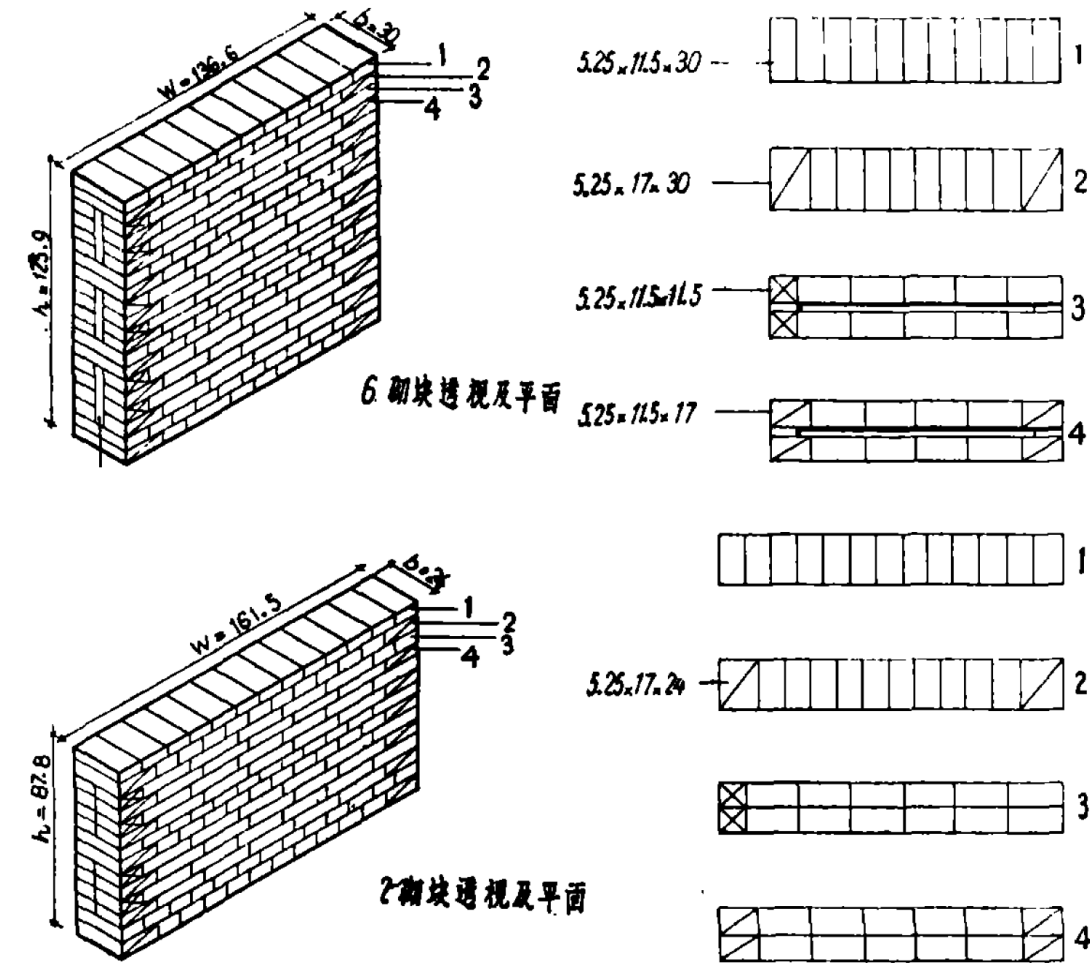
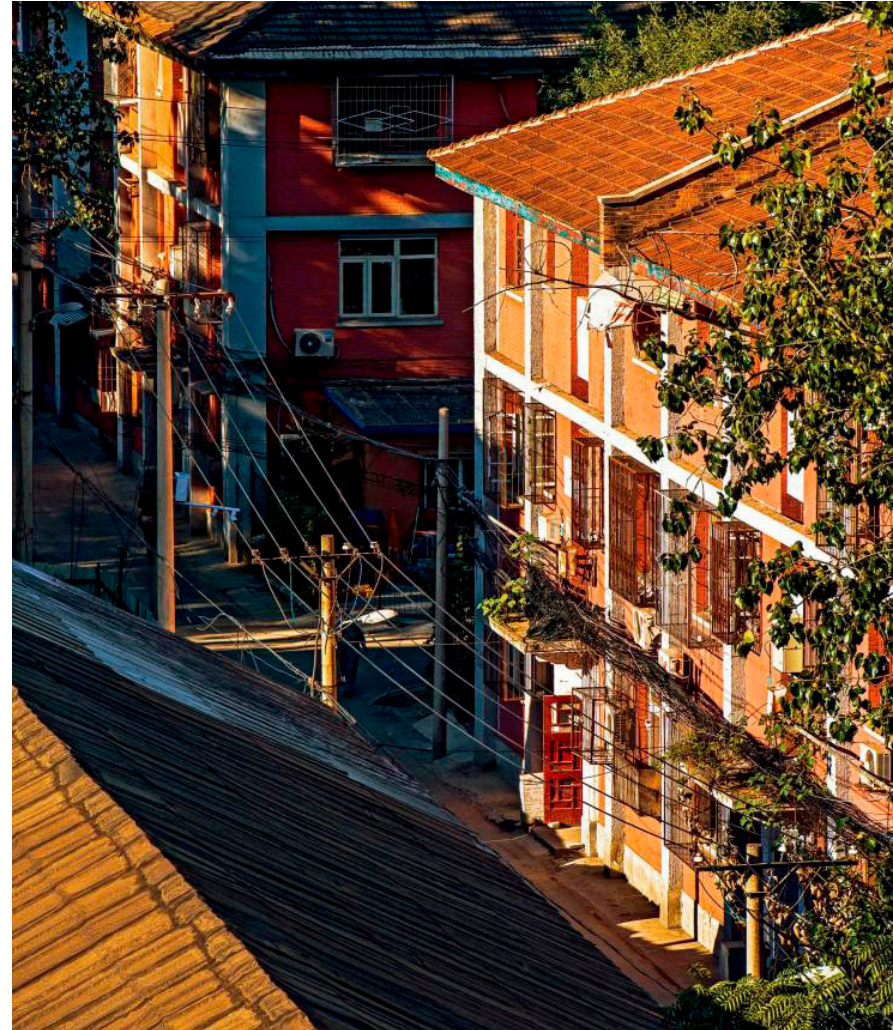


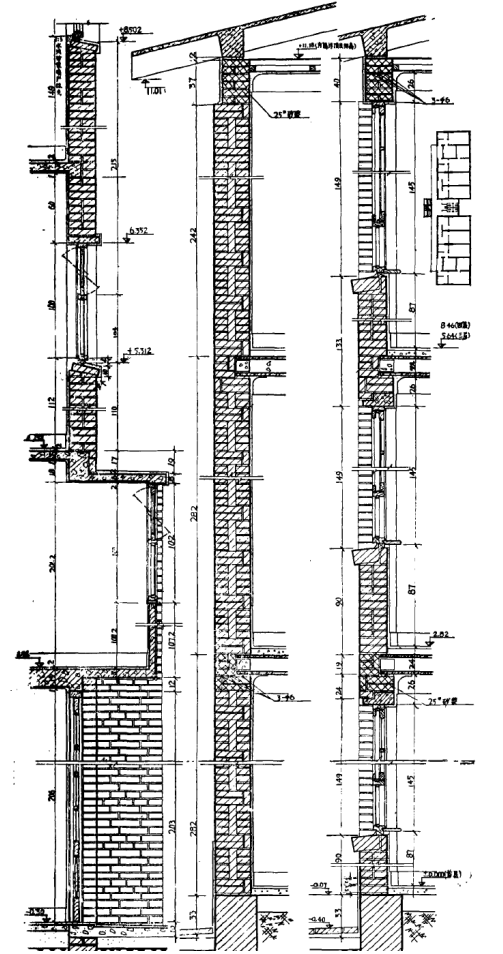
Diagram of the structure



Section of the balcony



Diagrams of how to make brick walls



Sections with structures of the building

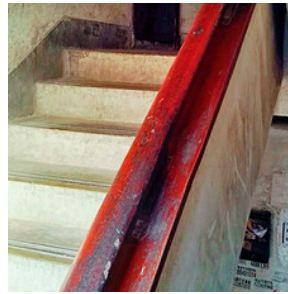
Architecture Design

2. Building Materials

The building was built Soviet Union's red brick style. Bricks that using for the facade are first-class red brick after good firing, so the wall is strong and solid. Doors, window frames, stair handrails are made by solid northeast redwood which passes high temperature process, so insects are hardly to grow and change the shape of the wood. Pure copper door handles, hinges, water pipes, faucets, toilet parts and shower heads are still in use today.



The Museum of the Patriotic War of 1812, Moscow



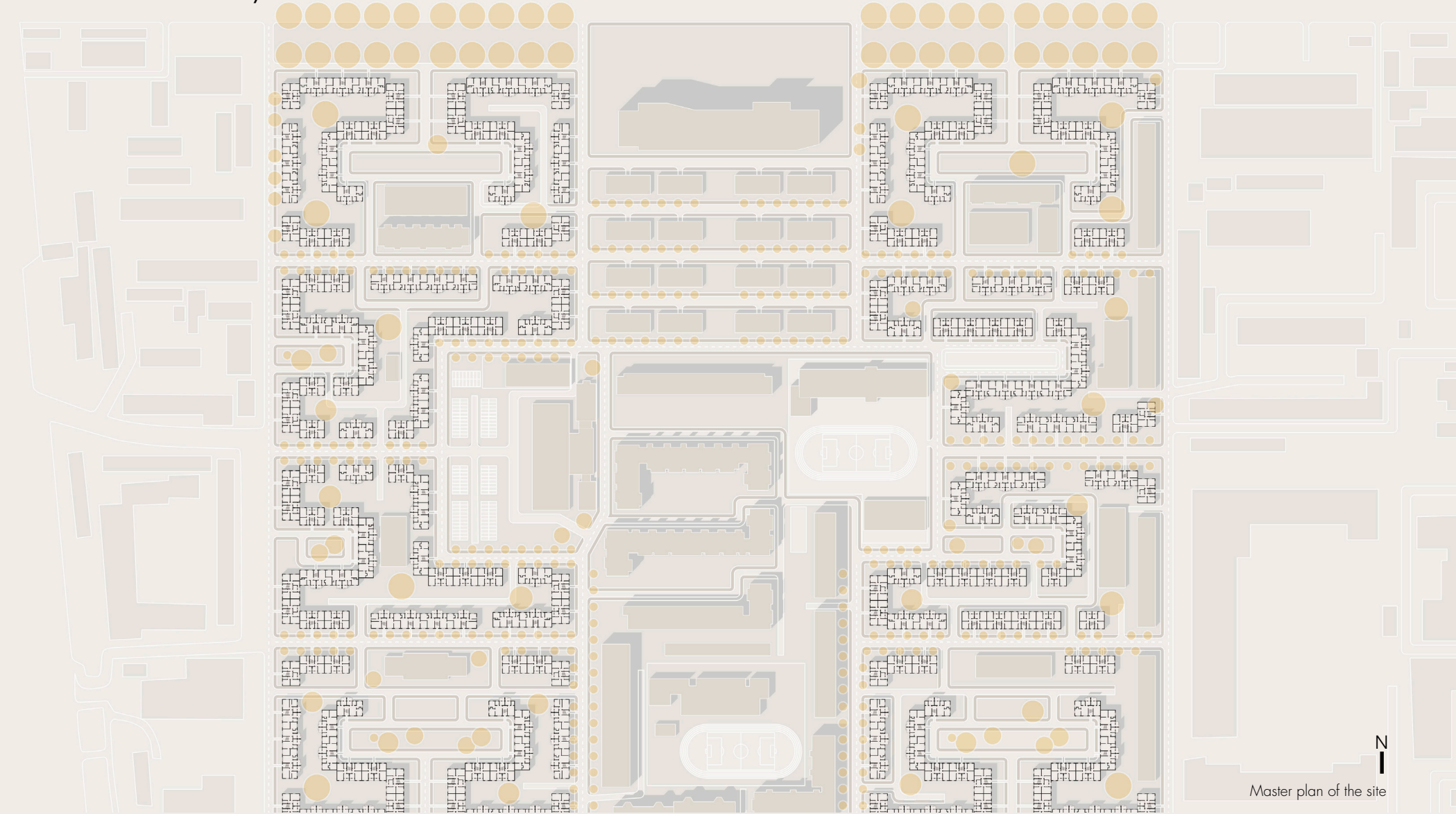
Baiwanzhuang, Beijing



Baiwanzhuang, Beijing

Architecture Design

3. Interior Layout

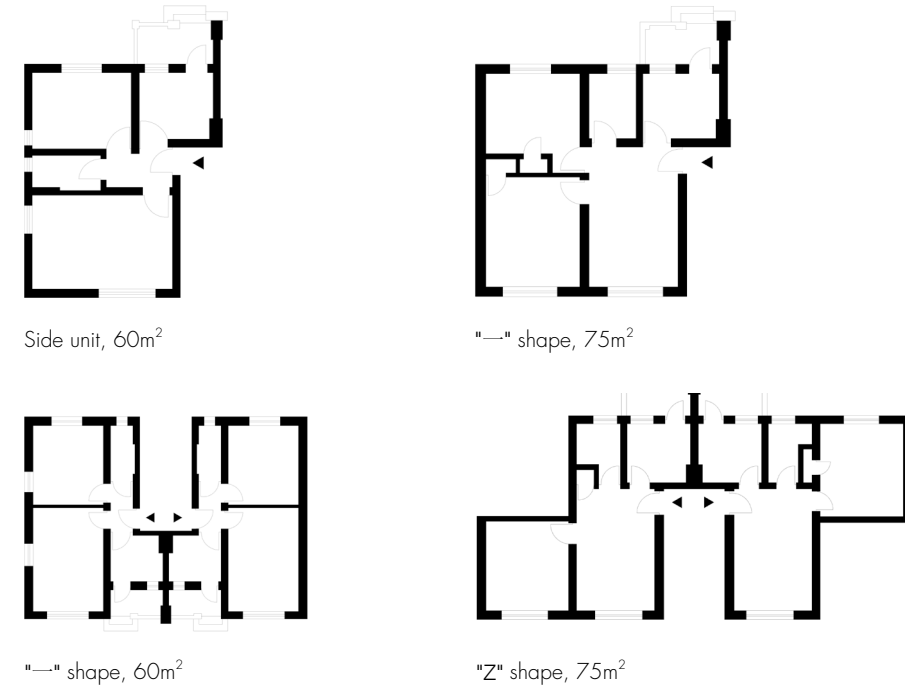


Master plan of the site

Same layout in different orientations



N



The periphery type allows people to enter from the outside and provides balcony to the courtyard. There are several types of layout including 60m² "Z" and "U" shape, 75m² "L" and "U" shape, and variety combination ways at the corner. All kinds of layouts are compact and practical with shallow depth.

Comply with the "economic and practical, combined with national conditions" and other principles.

At the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the per capita living area was only a few square meters. Baiwanzhuang first launched into 60 square meters two-bedroom layout for a family of three to live.

The rooms, which include separate bedrooms, living rooms, kitchens and bathrooms, are designed to focus on a large number of people in a short period of time. The apartment is designed in Soviet style, each room has windows. Also the apartment has a large kitchen, bathroom with showers and ventilation, and heating. Each unit has garbage channels.

The interior of the building is uniformly decorated with furniture, kitchen utensils, electric lights and curtains. The furniture is well furnished. There are numbered blue cards on the beds, cabinets and tables, which reflect the socialist distribution system. It was a direct reflection of the equitable and equal supply of living facilities.

The house number of the building presses counterclockwise order with the number, every unit has 6 apartments, most of the arrangement is one floor with 2 apartments in symmetrical layout except units at the corner. The entrance of the unit faces the public road on the outside of the group, and then forms a relatively quiet and private courtyard on the inside. Each house has two facing rooms, with views of the public areas outside the group and the inner courtyard.



Architecture Design

4. Details



The building adopts simple design for exterior walls, doors and windows without too much decoration. Huiwen decoration is a significant cultural feature of Baiwanzhuang Community. Deep red doors and windows in the corridor have the glass in Huiwen shape; the base of wooden stair handrail, the beam under the eave of the entrance and the column board of the balcony that face street also has such original pattern which starts from Shang Zhou dynasty and prosperous in Ming and Qing dynasties. The meaning of the pattern decoration

is about returning to peace and continuity.

The building mostly adopts the socialist content and the national form by adding Soviet Union's decoration in gables, cornices, handrails and so on.

The doors to the corridor, which opened at 180 degrees and closed automatically, are still in use today. There is an inclined sink under the corridor window for rain dewatering. The window is pushed out from the inside for keeping rain out of the corridor and letting air in.

Architecture Design

5. Renovation and Preservation



Due to neglect of management, housing facilities in the community are aging, there are many problems such as old wires, wood eaves peeling, leaking roof, the corridor wall moldy and other. The house has no insulation layer design, the original wooden window have poor insulation performance, so the indoor environment before and after providing heating is bleak and cold.

Old residents are afraid to decorate their houses and not willing to clean up corridors and courtyards. Due to the merger of ministries and commissions, the former sovereign units disappeared and leaving Baiwanzhuang in a situation of "unclear property rights, unclear responsibilities and rights", which causes the lack of maintenance.

- 1976 After the tangshan earthquake, the overall structure of many houses was damaged, although later strengthened, there are still safety risks.
- 2003 The relevant departments have identified it as a "dangerous house" and put forward demolition plans. The original residents called for protection.
- 2004 Zhang Kaiji, the chief designer of Baiwanzhuang, wrote to the leaders of Beijing government: "With the development of modern residential buildings, Baiwanzhuang has become a step, which is part of the historical and cultural heritage of Beijing".
- 2005 Lu Huaian, a member of the CPPCC national committee, put forward the protection proposal.
- 2011 The government announced a plan to "demolish and renovate the whole residential area". The original residents called for protection.
- 2013 Young architects from Tsinghua University founded "Baiwanzhuang studio" which focuses on the preservation and development of Baiwanzhuang.
- 2015 China youth urban planners association has set up a volunteer group called "Fall in love with Baiwanzhuang" with 100 members.
- 2019 Baiwanzhuang became the first batch of historical buildings in Beijing
- Now Continuing...

Social Framework Over Time

1. Resident

Original Residents

After liberation, Baiwanzhuang was selected as the residence of eight ministries and the first batch of government servants, and it was also the most densely populated residential area for national leaders and famous scholars after the founding of P. R. China. The people who used to live here are all the children of cadres, so Baiwanzhuang, at that time, represents the social elite. Residents here is people with good education living in rich families, having good quality of life. The present residents of Shen area is still leaders above the ministry level.

李鹏 Li Peng

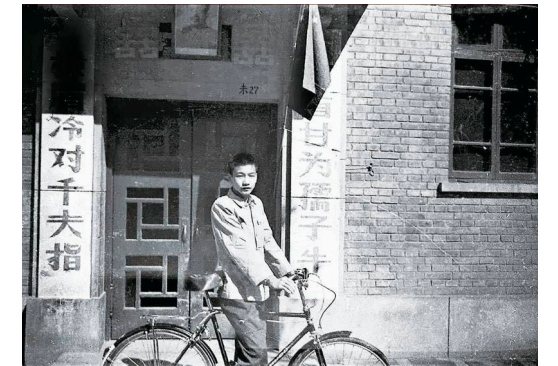
Li Peng was a Chinese politician. He served as the fourth Premier of the People's Republic of China from 1987 to 1998, and as the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, China's top legislative body, from 1998 to 2003.¹⁴

温家宝 Wen Jiabao

Wen Jiabao is a retired Chinese politician who served as the sixth Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China and serving as China's head of government for a decade between 2003 and 2013.¹⁵

曲波 Qu Bo

Qu Bo was a Chinese novelist. His first book *Tracks in the Snowy Forest* (《林海雪原》, 1957) made him one of the most popular authors at the time.

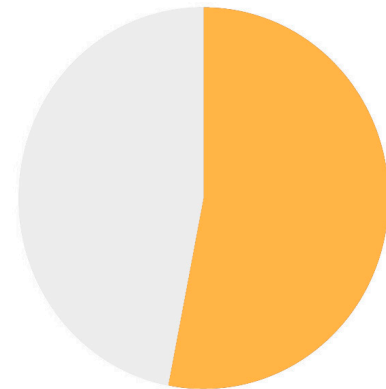


Area	0.52 km ²
Registered Households	4,023
Registered Resident	11,799
Permanent Resident	7,036
Impermanent Resident	2,927
Elder	3,747
Single Elder	11
Needy Resident	98
The Disabled	346
Psychopath	28

Population profile, 2017



Permanent Residents

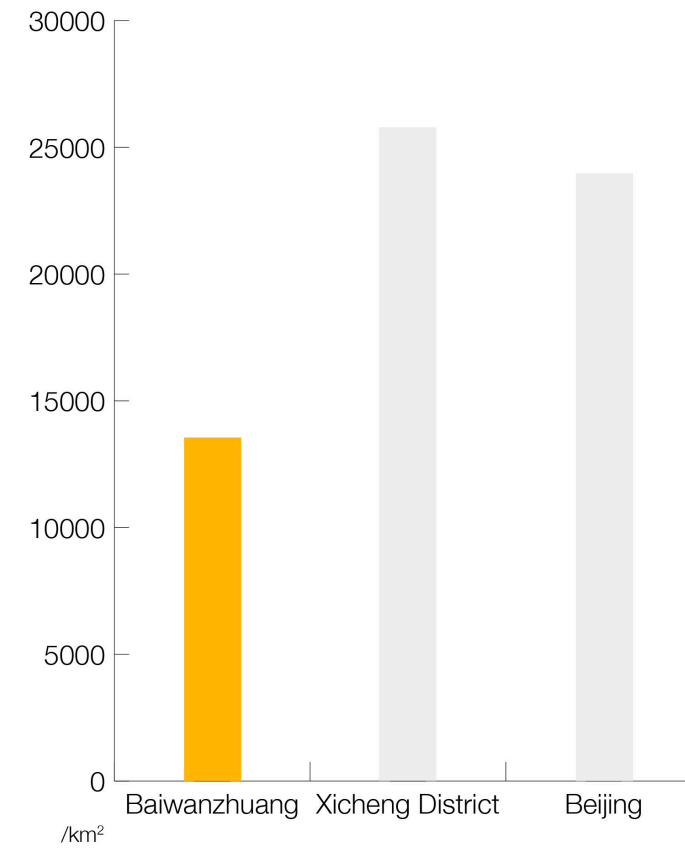


Permanent Elder Residents

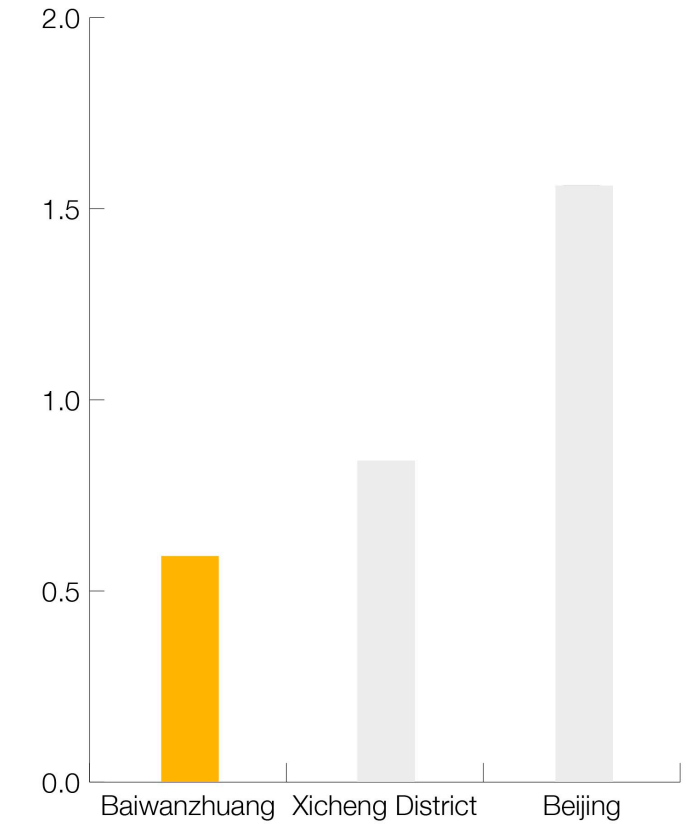
The age structure of the community is aging and the population is heterogeneous. (2017)

Current Residents

The aging of the community makes the original residents move out, either rent or sell. Nowadays, millions of residents come from mixed sources, and most of them are elderly. Half of them are old residents, a third of them are foreign tenants, and the rest are new tenants and public rental tenants. Some of the new residents come from nearby work units. In addition, vendors at three nearby wholesale markets rent two-bedroom apartment as storage.



The overall population density of the community is low, which is consistent with the low plot ratio. (2017)



The population of Baiwanzhuang community diminished, which shows a declining trend as a whole. (2017)

Social Framework Over Time

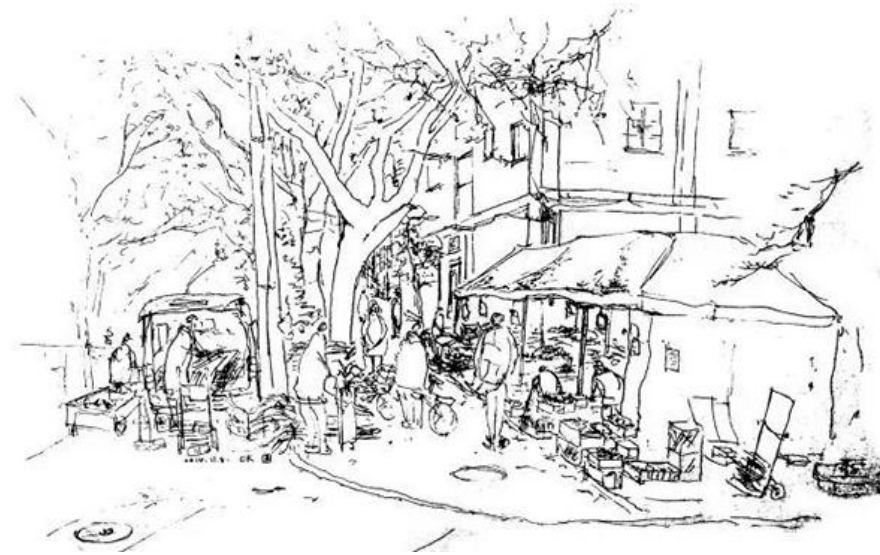
2. Neighborly Relation

“胡同文化是一种封闭文化……四合院是一个盒子。北京人理想的住家是‘独门独院’，同时又很讲究‘处街坊’‘远亲不如近邻’。”
"Hutong culture is a closed culture... Siheyuan is a box. The ideal home for beijingers is to live in a house with a single family. At the same time, they also pay attention to living in a neighborhood."

汪曾祺《胡同文化》
Wang Zengqi, *Hutong Culture*

Different from the courtyard of siheyuan, the cluster mode of baiwanzhuang community provides a new courtyard mode of group living. The enclosed courtyard carries the family life and social life of the community. People not only feel a sense of security and belonging, but also experience the neighborhood affection in the courtyard life. At the same time, the neighborhood is surrounded by working office, residents are both colleagues and neighbors, so the neighborhood relationship is even closer.

However, the increase of foreign residents leads to the change of population composition, the neighborhood is no longer familiar with each other, the social relationship is broken and the sense of community belonging gradually dies out.



Social Framework Over Time

3. Descriptions in Literature

“在非‘老兵’类顽主的眼里，百万庄地区无异于敌占区，特别是在百万庄的诸多区块中，申区简直是百万庄的灵魂。这是一片二层小楼的高级住宅区，里面的住户级别最低的也是副部级干部。他们的子女，都是‘老兵’中最有影响力的人物，也就是说，谁要是得罪了他们之中的一个，后果是相当严重的，他们有能力在很短时间内召集数百人进行报复。”

"In the eyes of the non-veterans, Baiwanzhuang is no different from the enemy's territory, especially in the many parts of Baiwanzhuang, the shen district is the soul. This is a two-story residential area, the lowest level of residents are vice-ministerial cadres. Their children are among the most influential of the 'veterans', that is, if anyone offends one of them, the consequences are severe, and they have the ability to muster hundreds of people in a very short time to retaliate."

都梁《血色浪漫》
Du Liang, *Bloody Romantic*

“而今天，祖国已空前强大，在各个建设战线上都获得了辉煌的成就，人民生活也正在迅速提高。我的宿舍（百万庄小区）是这样的温暖舒适，家庭生活又是如此的美满，这一切，杨子荣、高波等同志没有看到，也没有享受到。但正是为了美好的今天和更美好的未来，在最艰苦的岁月里，他们献出了自己最宝贵的生命。”

"But today, the motherland has been unprecedentedly strong, in all construction fronts have achieved brilliant achievements, people's lives are also improving rapidly. My dormitory (Baiwanzhuang) is so warm and comfortable, family life is so happy, but Yang Zirong, Gao Bo and other comrades did not see all this happiness, also did not enjoy. But it was for a better day and a better future that they gave their most precious lives in the most trying times."

曲波《林海雪原》
Qu Bo, *Tracks in the Snowy Forest*

Social Framework Over Time

4. Surrounding Area



Working

China Academy of Urban Planning and Design
 Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development
 China urban development and environmental engineering office
 Overseas Chinese Affairs Office
 Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences
 China News Service
 Beijing Environment Protection Science Academe
 Beijing State-owned Cultural Assets Supervision and Administration Office
 Beijing State Administration of Taxation
 China Architecture Design & Research Group
 China Textile Industrial Engineering Institute



Business

Ganjiakou Department Store
 Chuangjing Plaza
 Maixing Plaza
 Tongji Plaza
 Wuhua Plaza
 Guanyuan Plaza
 Jintaihuayun Plaza
 Tianhe International Plaza
 Shijitianle Plaza
 Wanrongtiandi International Fashion Center
 Beikuang Financial Center
 Laolaile Cultural Square



Residence

Zengguanglu Community
 Gandong Community
 Fubei Community
 Huangguayuan
 Beiyingfang Community (West + East)
 Zhanlanlu Putaoyuan
 Shangzhuge
 Chaoyangan Community
 Huankeyuan Community
 Yushuguan Community
 Zhanlanguan Road Community
 Ganjiakou Community



Education

Beijing Experimental School
 Beijing No. 8 High School
 Beijing Huawen School
 China Foreign Affairs University
 Fendou Elementary School
 Beijing Xicheng Foreign Languages School
 Beijing Shimei Vocational School
 Beijing Administration Institute
 Capital Normal University Affiliated Experimental School
 Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture
 Beijing Xicheng Sports School
 Beijing Jinbu Elementary School

Curatorial

SCALE

From Urban Fabric to Interior Layout

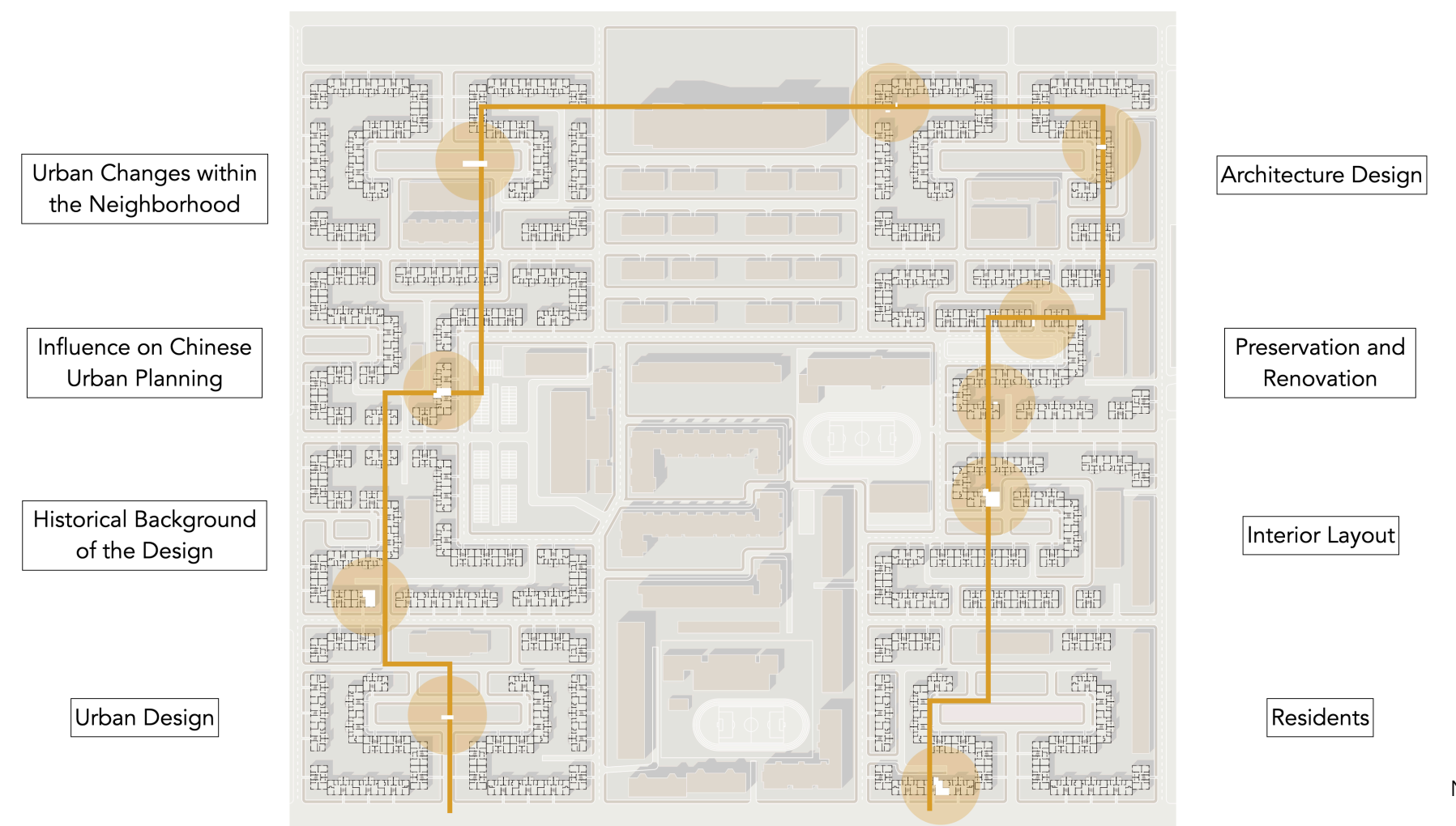
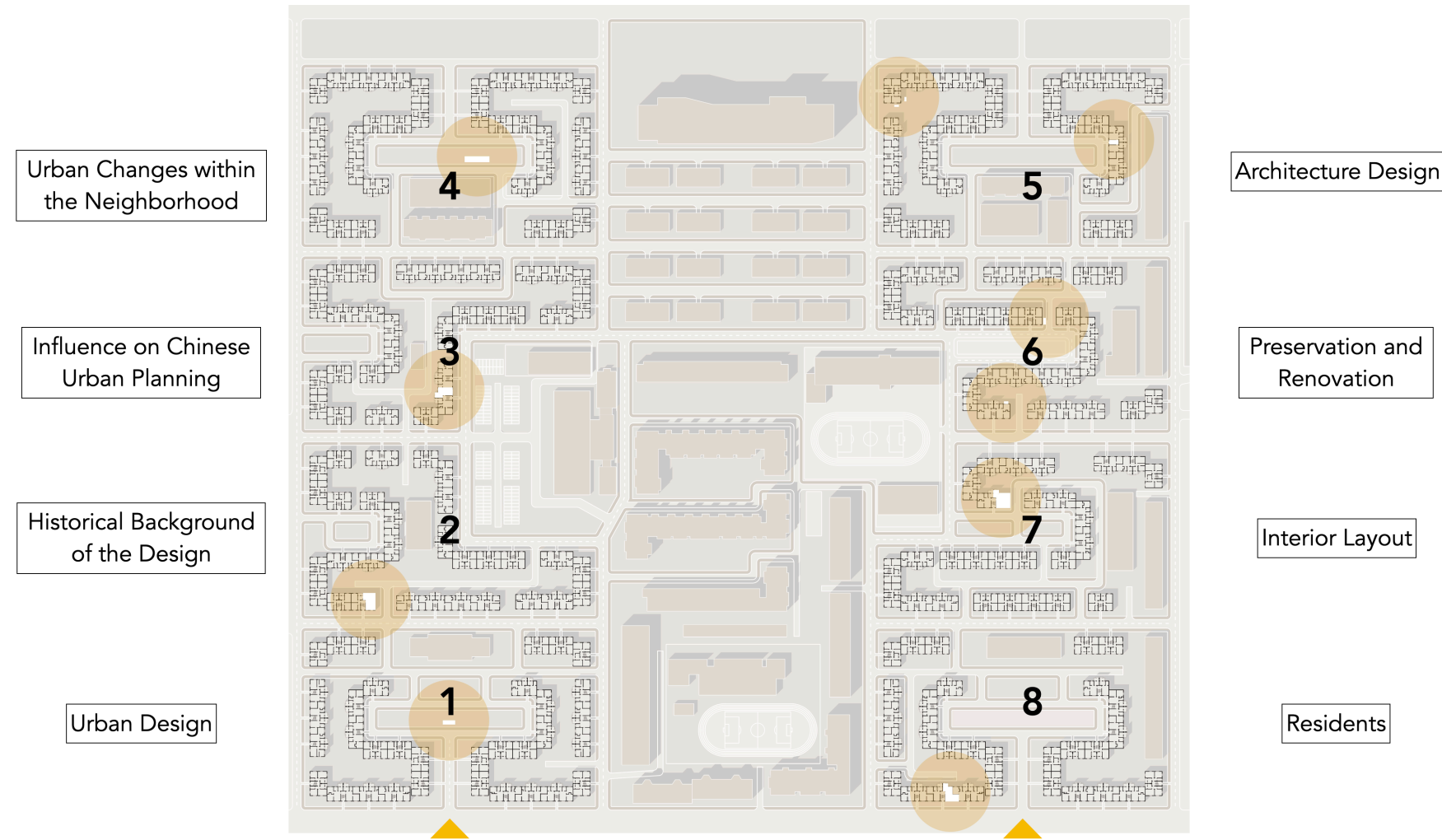
CONTENT

From Design to Life

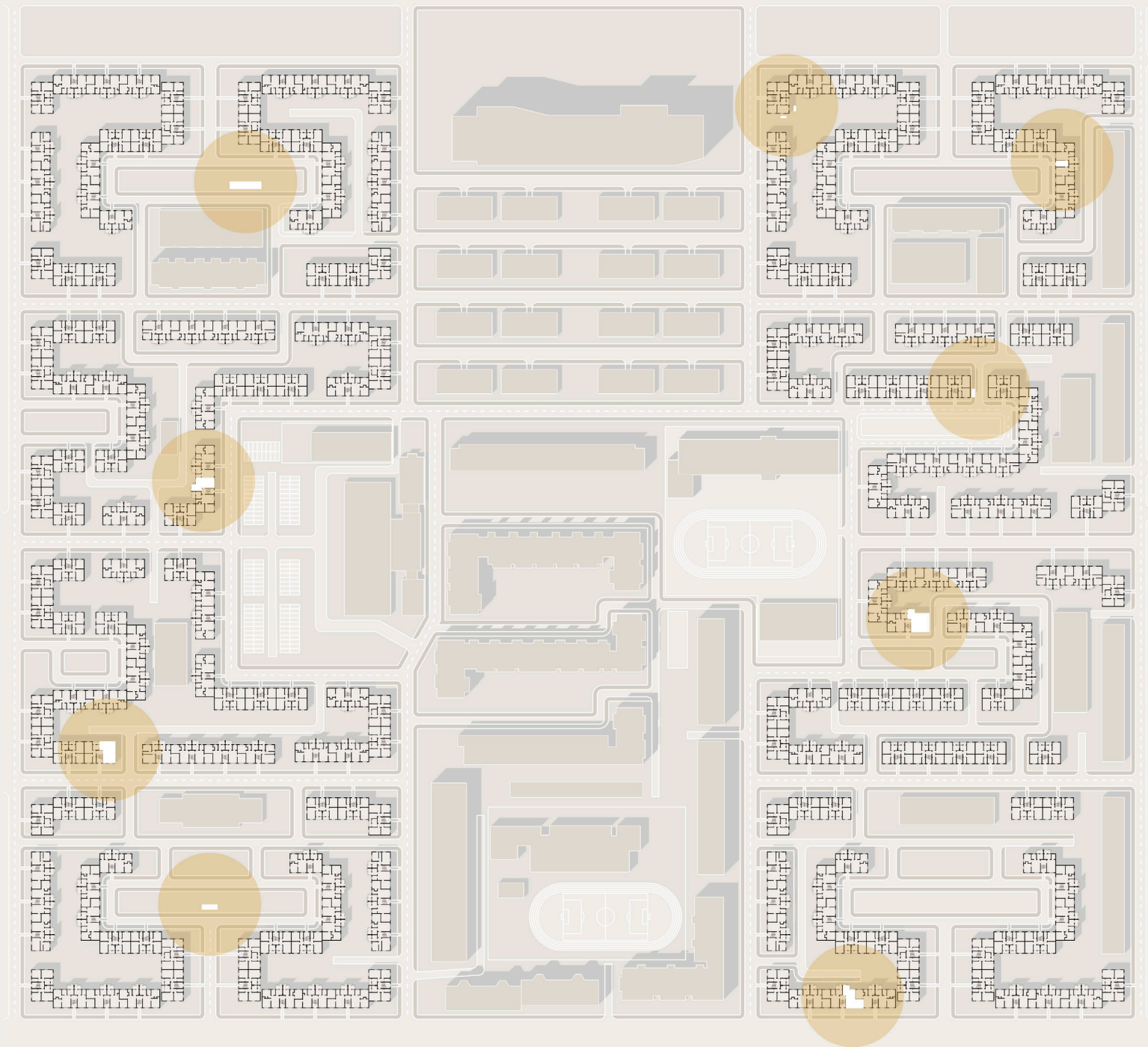
EXPERIENCE

From Visiting to Living

Based on the initial grid that my site has, I separated all of my exhibition into 8 sections. And for each section, I'll have different topics for the exhibition. Some exhibitions will be exterior and some will be interior. The sequence of all topics from 1-8 will be from large scale to small scale. But since I'll have 2 entrances from the south side, the visiting sequence could be opposite, which means from small scale to large scale. And then I'll suggest a visiting route to connect all exhibitions. But visitors still have freedom to choose what they want to see, and they can just explore the site by themselves.



Concept and Design



Precedents

1. Exhibition Approach

Casa Milà

Barcelona, Spain
Antoni Gaudí

The surface area, over 10,000 square feet in size, posed a challenge. The outer facade of the building seems to follow no clear plan. Continually changing waves, bulges and niches create the overall impression of something asymmetrical, something "natural". Nothing about this house is uniform. The ground-plans of each floor do not resemble one another. There is not one to be found in the whole casa milà complex. Everything is borne by numerous pillars and supports. The rooms are of differing heights in keeping with the wavy form of the facade.¹⁶ Part of the architecture is now becoming a museum, where people can go inside to one of the apartment and enjoy the well-preserved furnitures and living conditions. A visiting route was designed for visitors to go through all highlighting parts in the building.



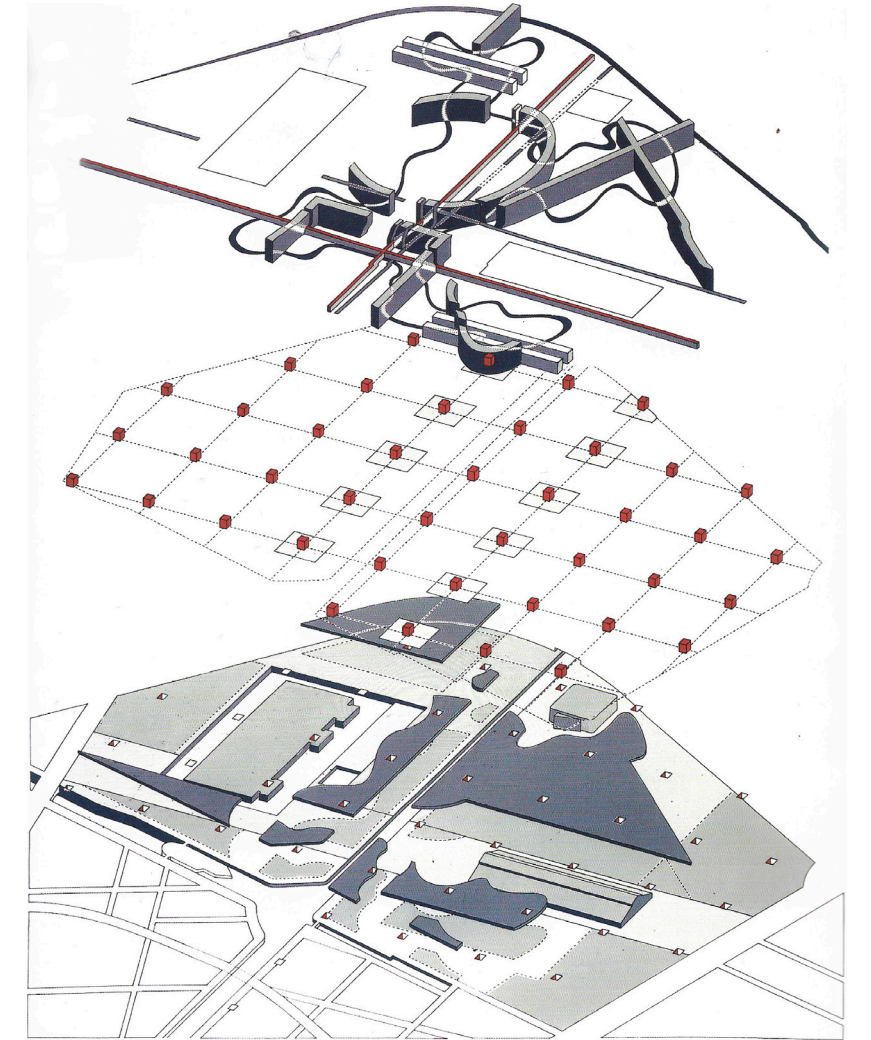
Precedents

2. Urban Methodology

Parc de La Villette

Paris, France
Bernard Tschumi

In 1982 the French Government organized an international architectural competition for the Parc de la Villette. Its objectives were both to mark the vision of an era and to act on the future economic and cultural development of a key area in Paris. In March 1983, Bernard Tschumi was selected to win this competition. His winning scheme had been conceived as a large metropolitan venture, derived from the disjunctions and dissociations of our time. It attempted to propose a new urbanist strategy by articulating concepts such as "superimposition", architectural "combination" and "cinematic" landscapes. Tschumi described the park as "the largest discontinuous building in the world".



Program and User Group

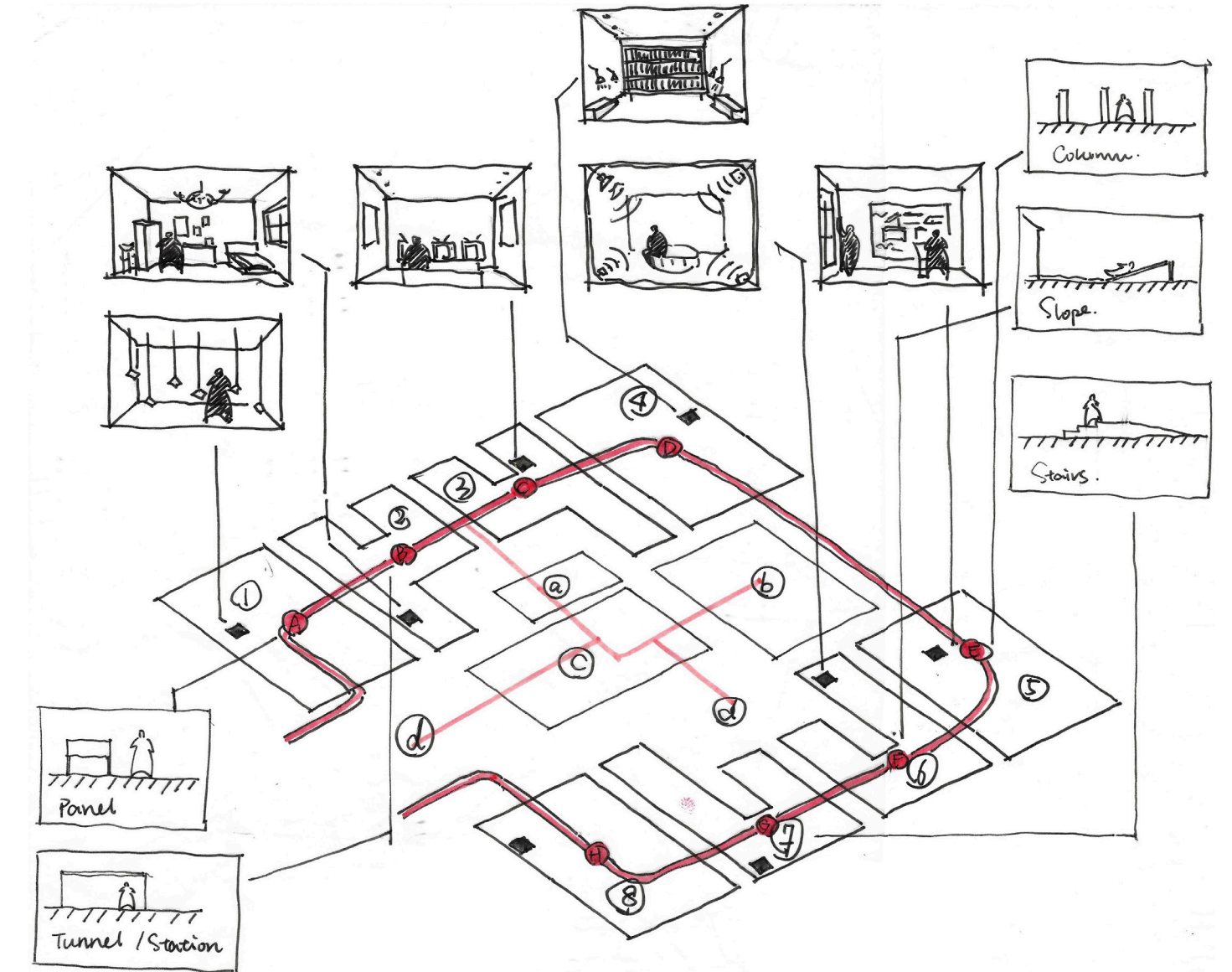
FOUR LAYERS

1. Urban Solution
New routes for visiting outdoor highlights of the community's building.
2. Exterior Exhibition
Combining with the visiting route and the new urban design approach, creating observatory installations for exploring design methodologies of the community.
3. Go into the Residences
Diffusing museum based on several residences in the community, showing resident's life in social (changes) aspects.
4. Home-stay
Reserved accomodation, living with native Chinese people and experiencing real Chinese daily life and habit.

TARGET PEOPLE

Main: Students, Designers, Scholars in architecture and urban planning or related fields.
(Close to Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture, China Architecture Design & Research Group and Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, etc.)
Others: Tourists
(Close to famous sightseeing place in Beijing such as Beijing Zoo, Beijing Planetarium, etc.)

Concept Drawing

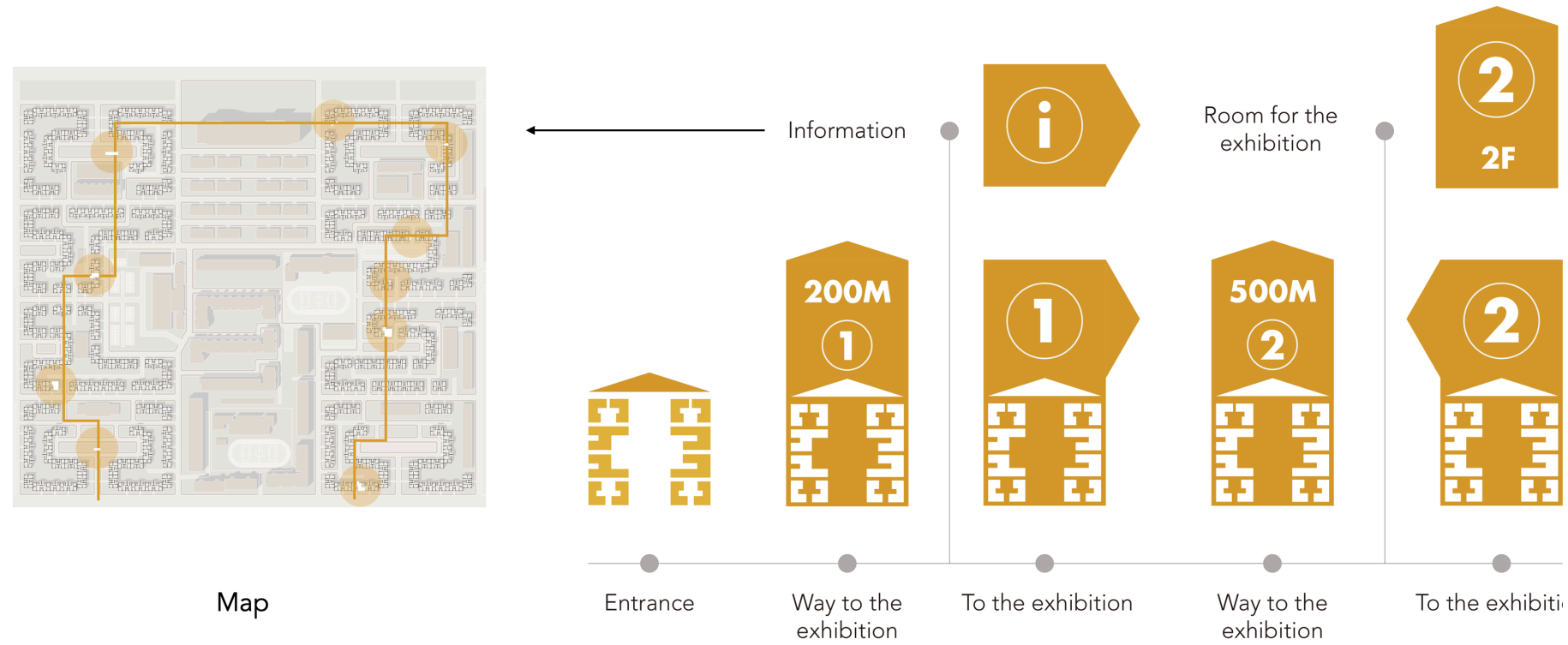


1-8 / Sections of the Exhibition
A-H / Observatory Installations
a-d / Additional Exhibitions

Exhibition

1. Visiting Path

For the suggesting route, I'll have some ground stickers as guide to lead people. Around each exhibition space, information basket will be there to offer maps as well.



Exhibition

2. Material and Structure

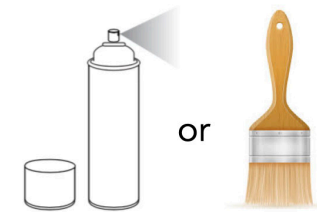
How to build the frame structure



1/4" Carbon Fiber Rods Tube



Welded



Sprayed or painted white by machine

How panels mounted on the metal frame

Glued Welded



1/4" Plywood(or other) Panel

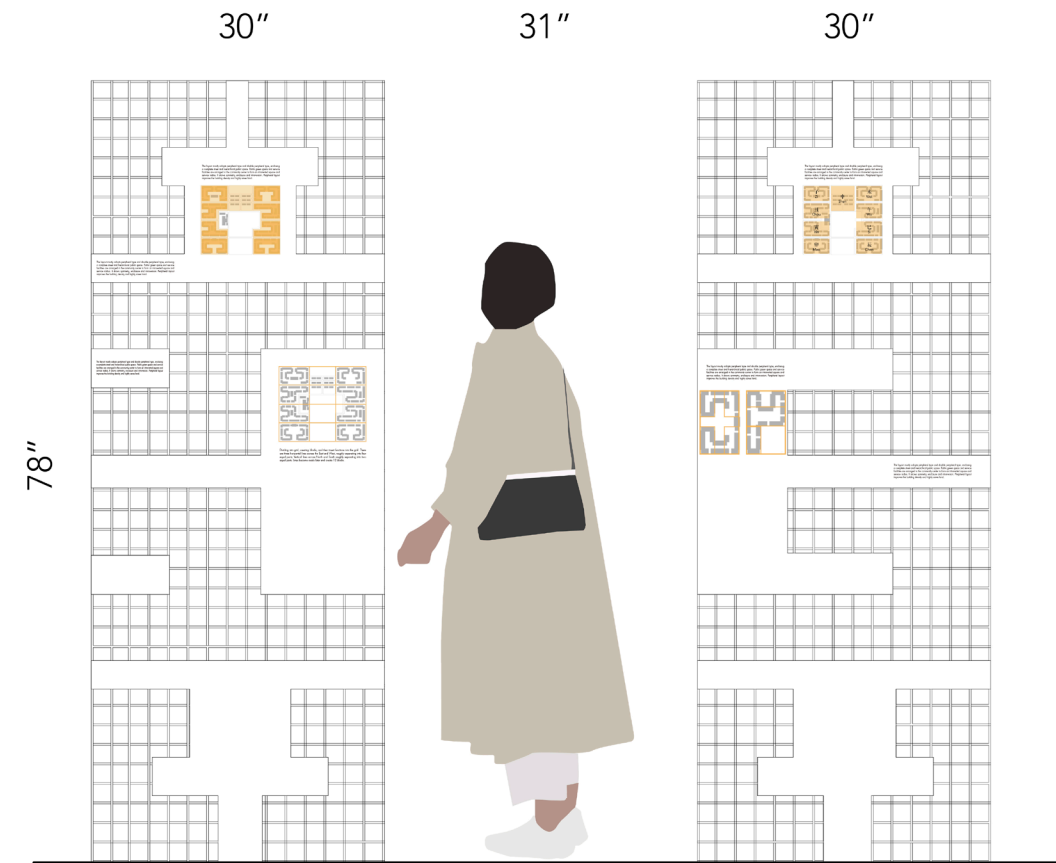
1/8" Metal Panel

1/4" Metal Frame

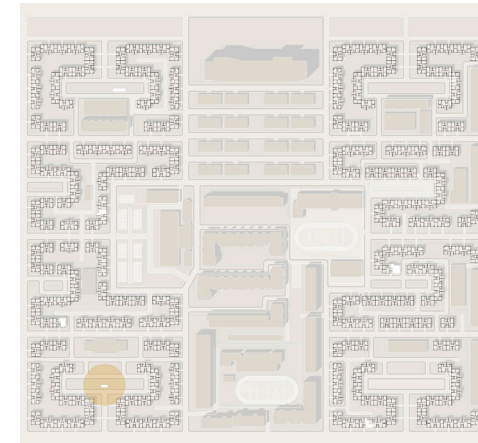
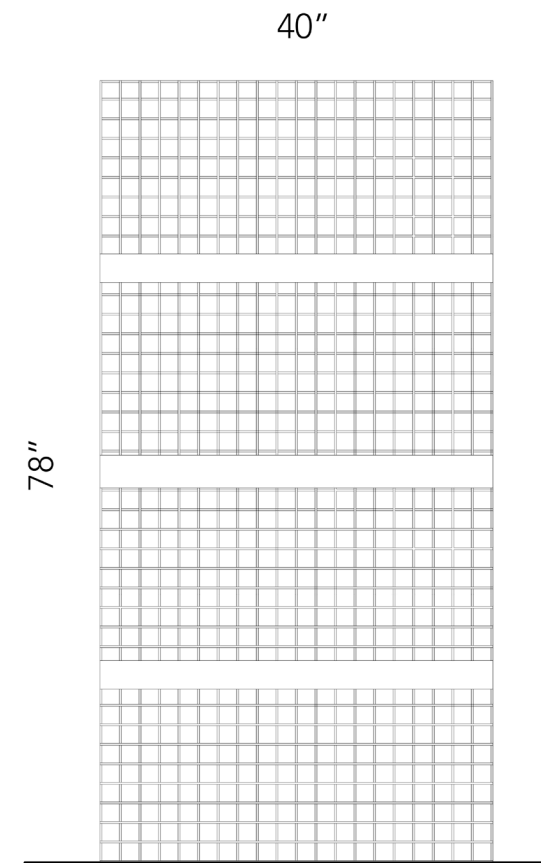
Exterior Exhibition

Observatory Installation: Urban Design

South Elevation



East Elevation



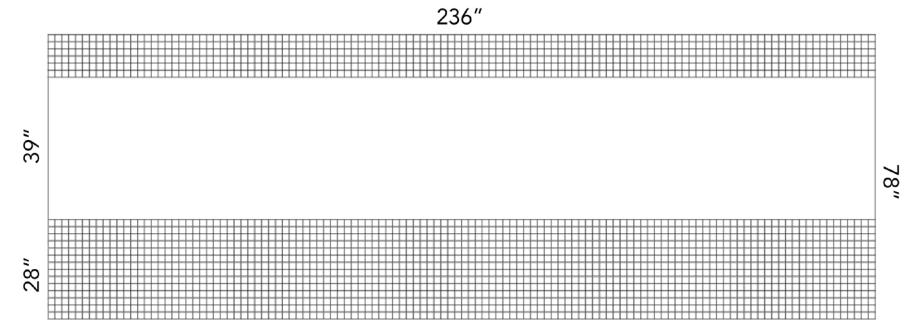
Location of the Installation



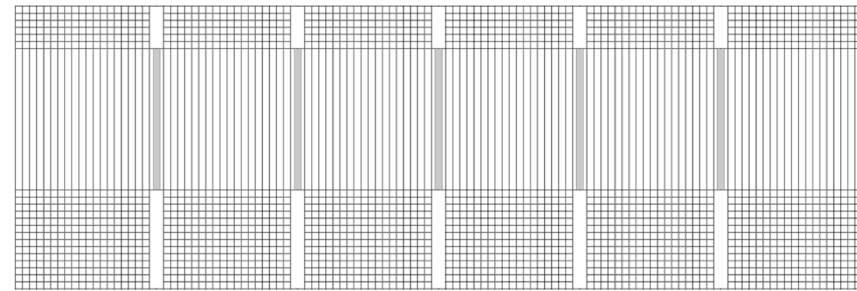
The first section is about urban design of the site. In order to give people a clearly understand on the urban fabric of the site, the installation that I design follows the pattern of buildings in the neighborhood, but it's more abstract than the real pattern. Panels that are mounted on the metal frame structure represent space without buildings in the urban fabric, and will include graphics and writings that are about the topic.

Exterior Exhibition

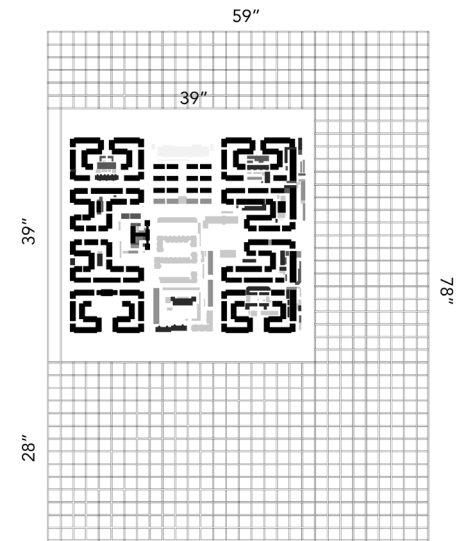
Observatory Installation: Urban Changes within the Neighborhood



North Elevation



South Elevation



East Elevation

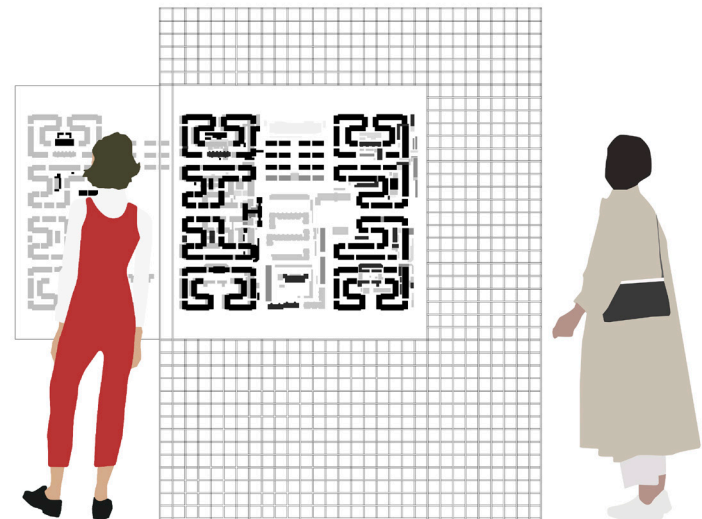
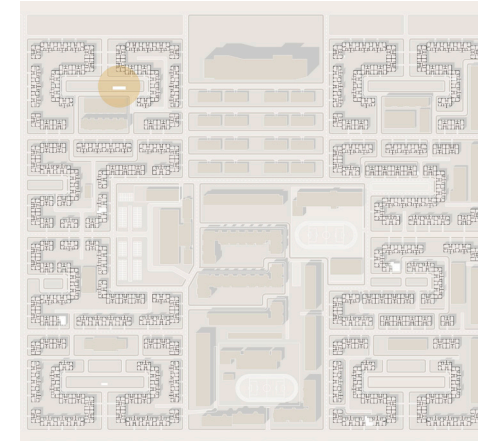
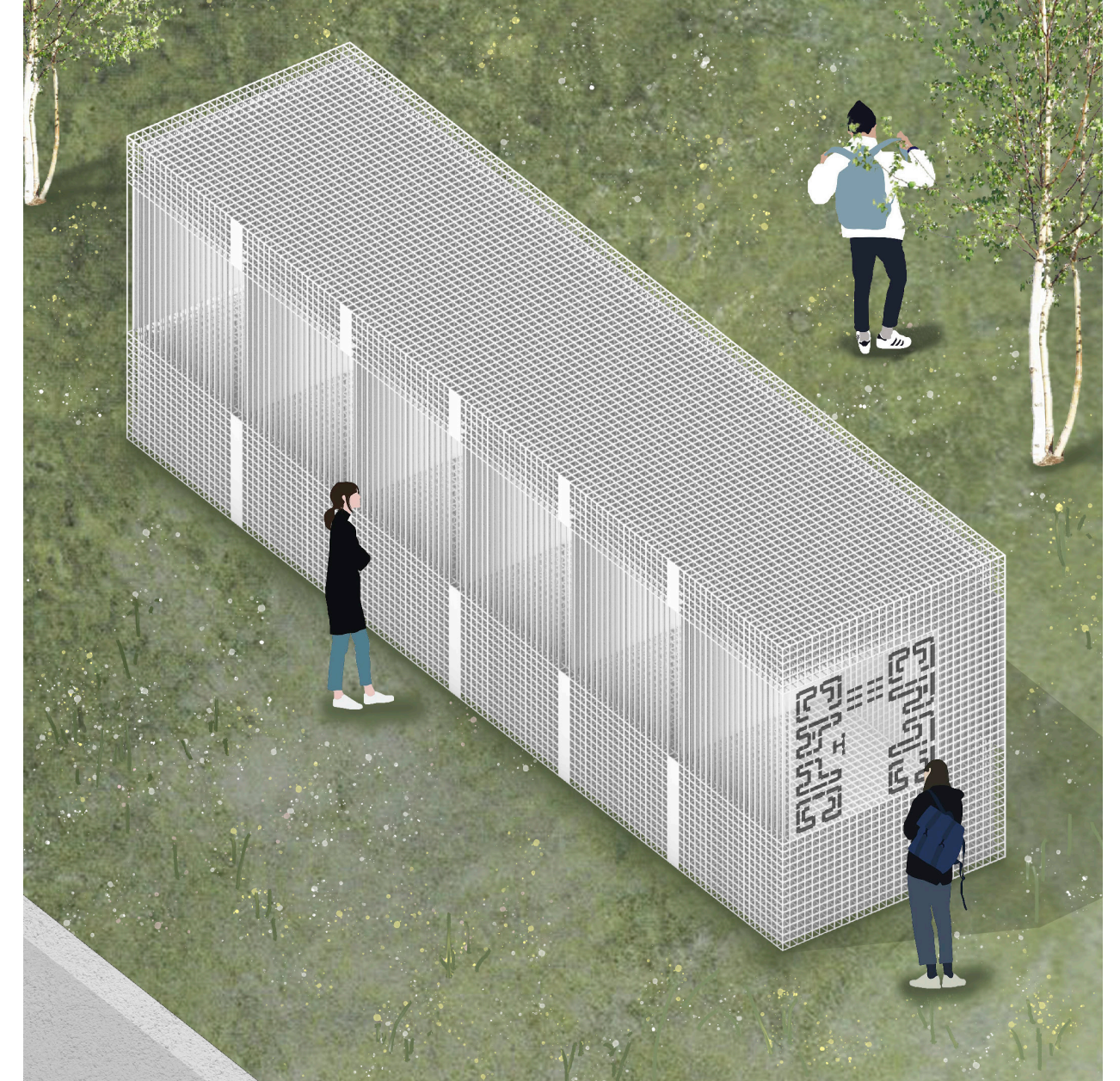


Diagram of the Sliding Panel



Location of the Installation

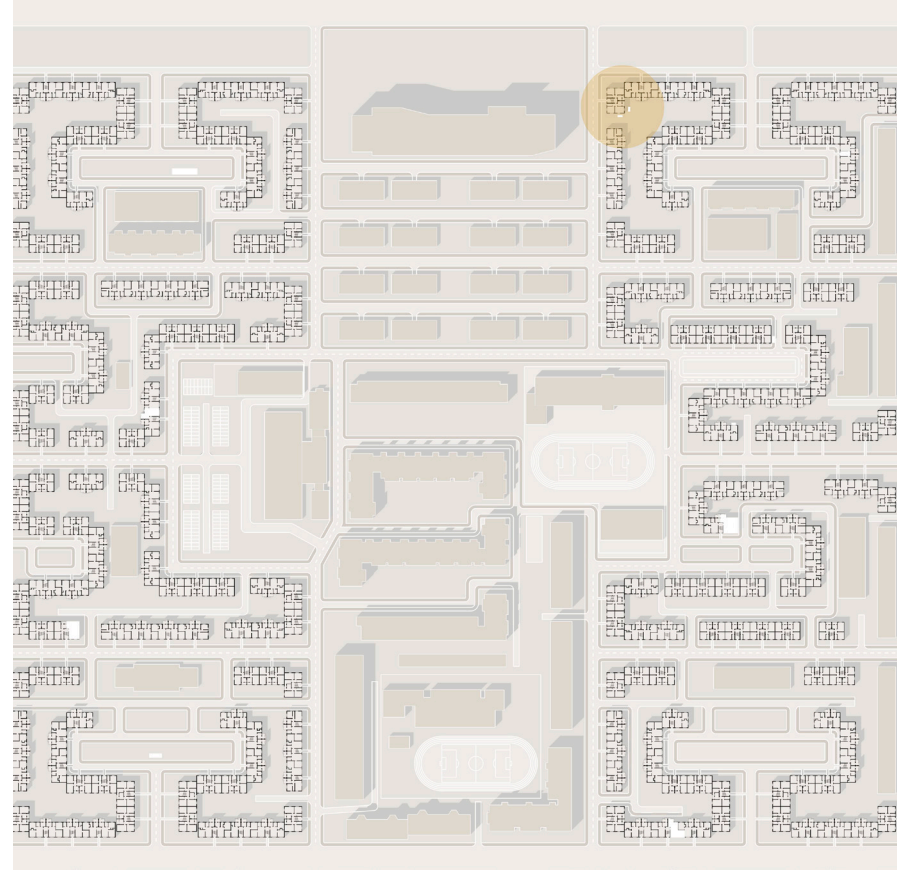


The design of this installation comes from the previous research of the neighborhood's internal environmental changes from 1950 to today. Transparent sliding panels are arranged in chronological order and overlapped, showing how the neighborhood has changed over time. Visitors can pull out panels that they are interested in to see more specific content in detail. The installation's south facade panel serves as supplementary information and will present more historical context.

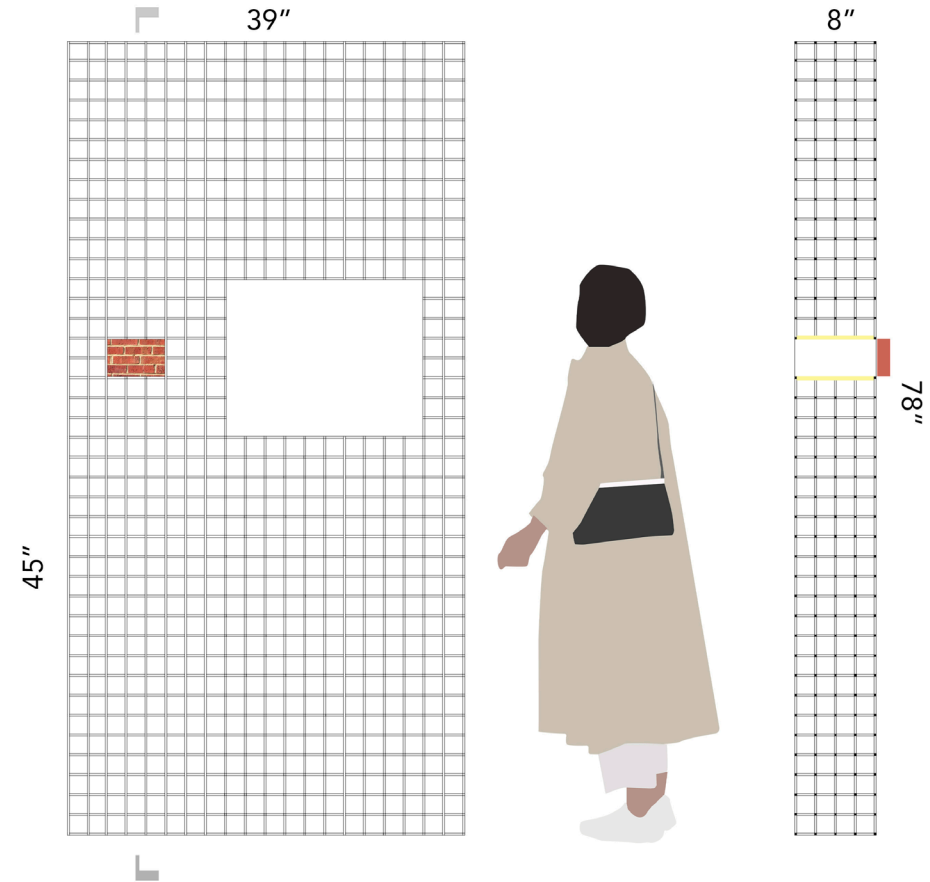
Exterior Exhibition

Observatory Installation: Building Material / Brick

Location of the Installation



South Elevation



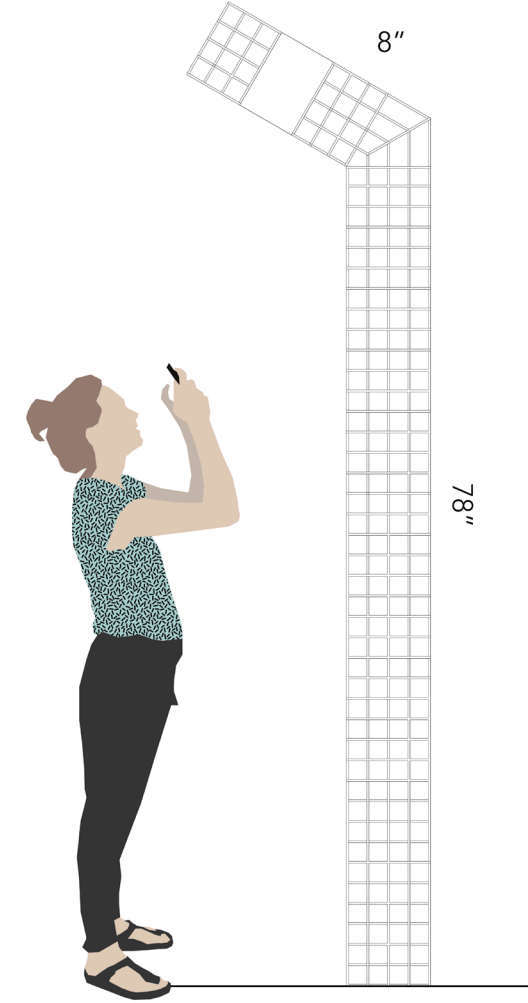
The main idea of this installation is to frame out the brick material with introductions next to it to explain more on the material and tell stories behind.



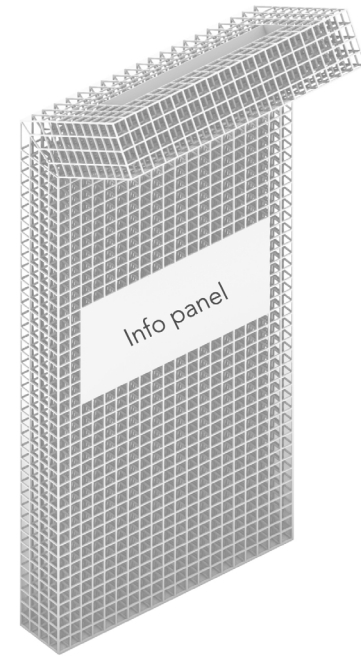
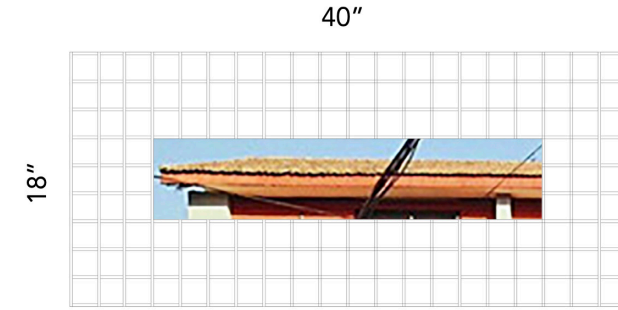
Exterior Exhibition

Observatory Installation: Building Material / Roof

North Elevation



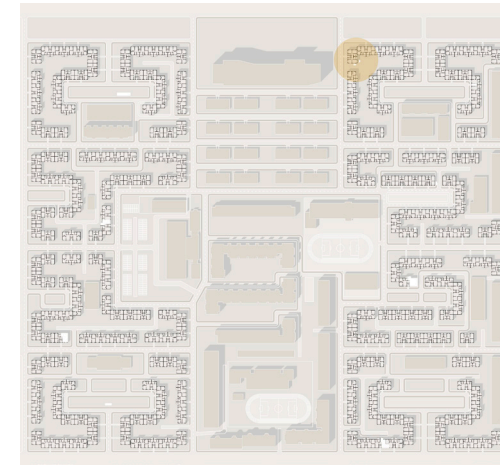
View through out the Frame



Axonometric View

The second part is roof material. The main idea is same with the brick one, which is frame out the material, and the slanted structure forces people to look up.

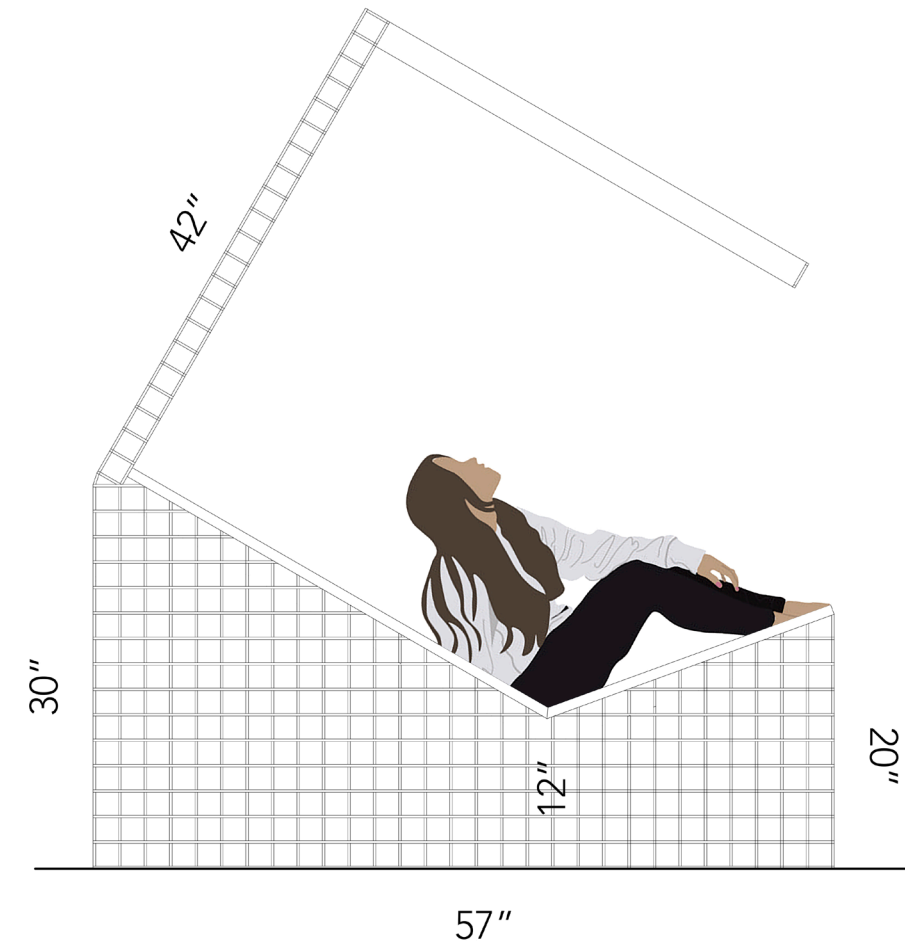
Location of the Installation



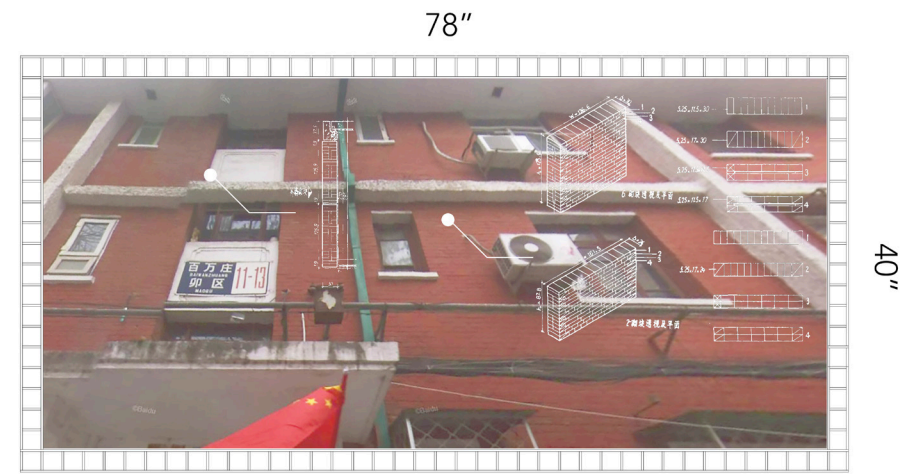
Exterior Exhibition

Observatory Installation: Architecture Structure

North Elevation

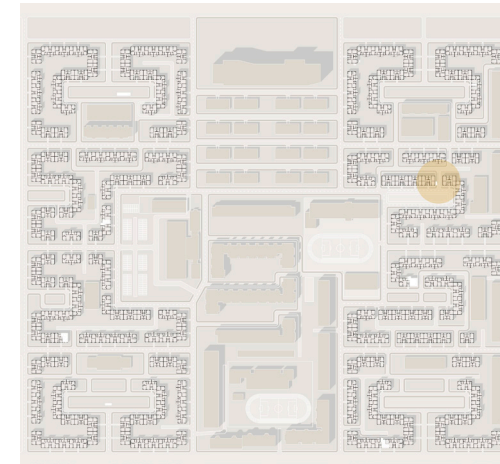


View through out the Frame



The idea of this design is to overlap architectural drawings and real buildings together. So people can sit on the installation and look out through the transparent panel with drawings to understand directly how each parts are built. The angle of the sitting will force people to look up

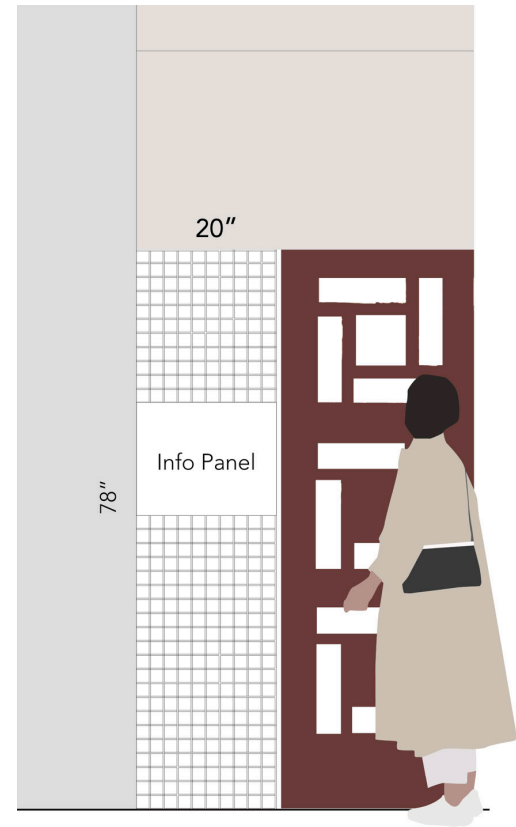
Location of the Installation



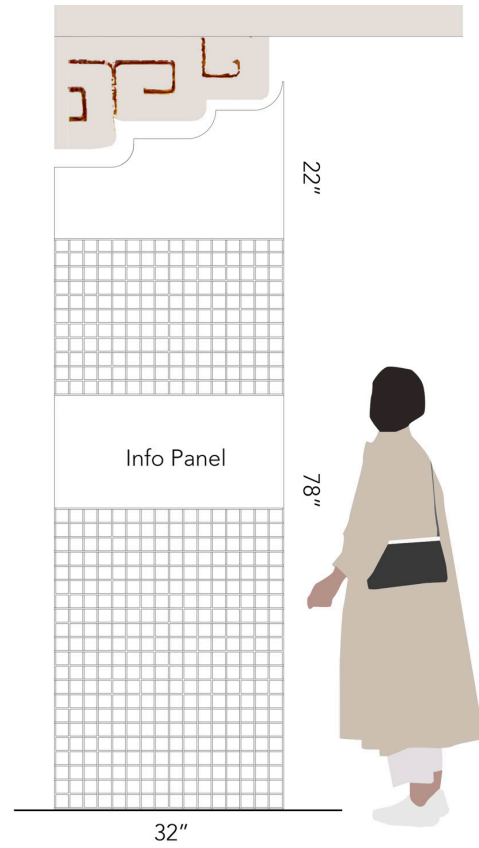
Exterior Exhibition

Observatory Installation: Architecture Details

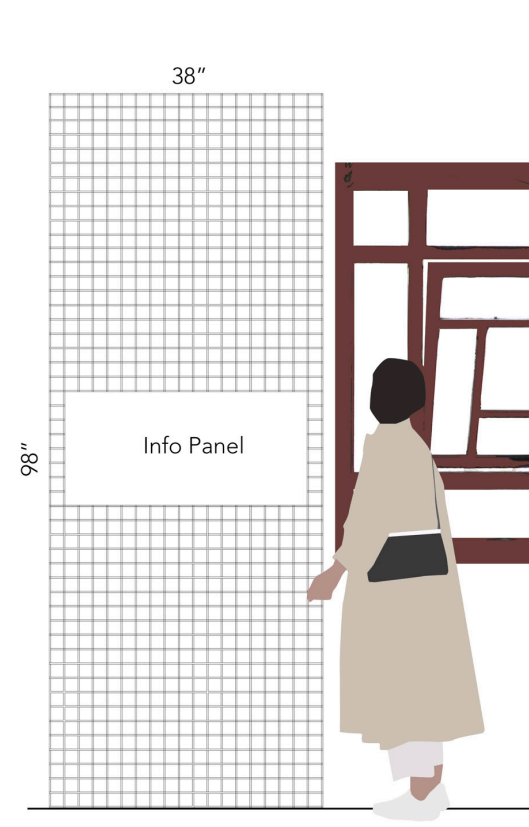
Elevation of Installation 1



Elevation of Installation 2

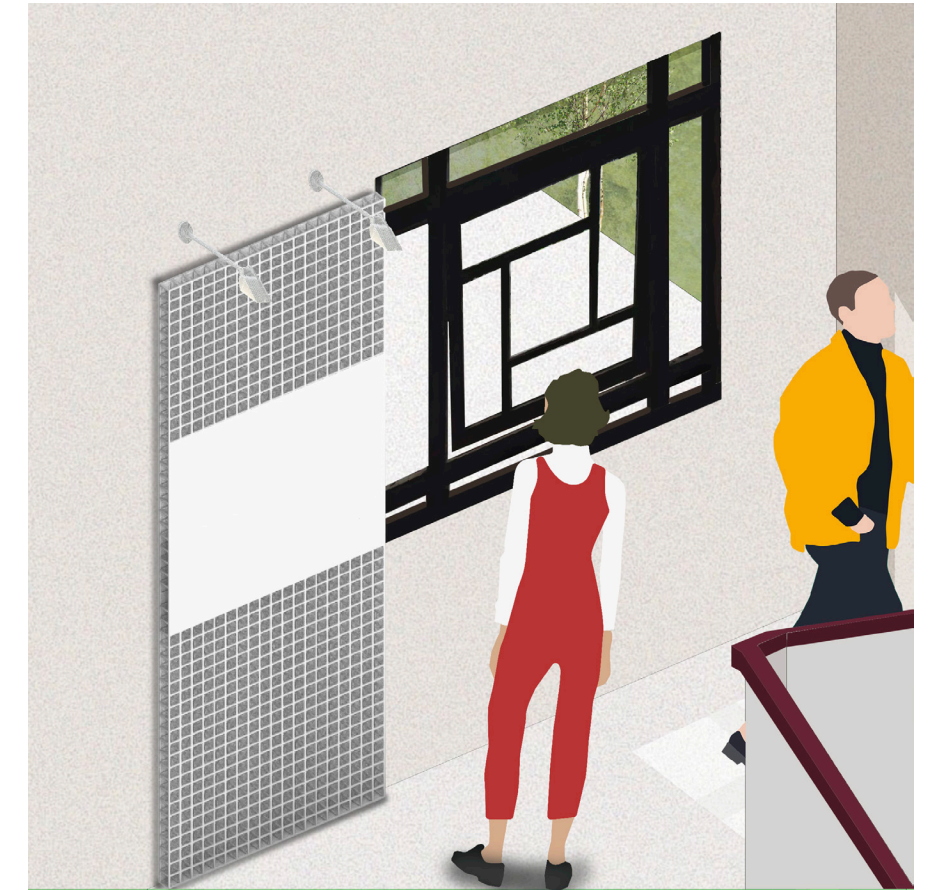
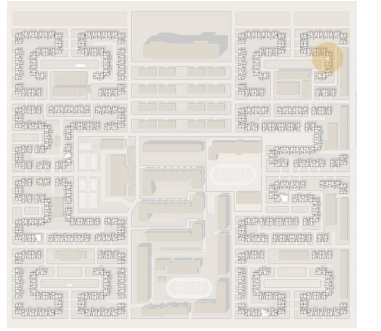


Elevation of Installation 3



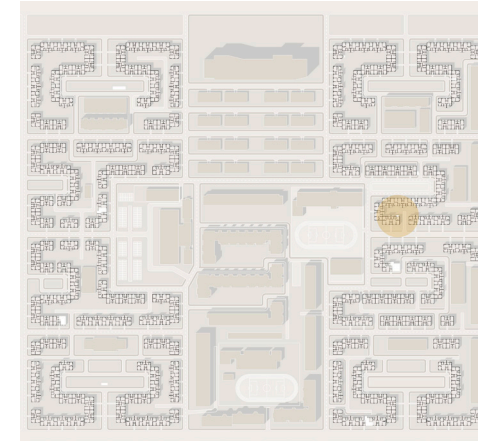
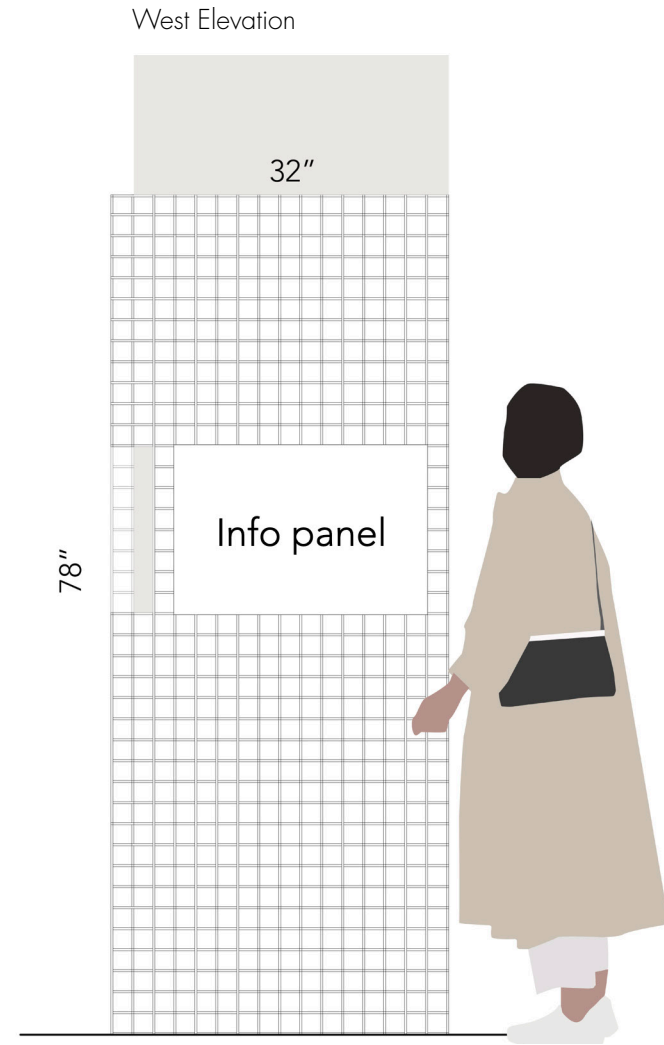
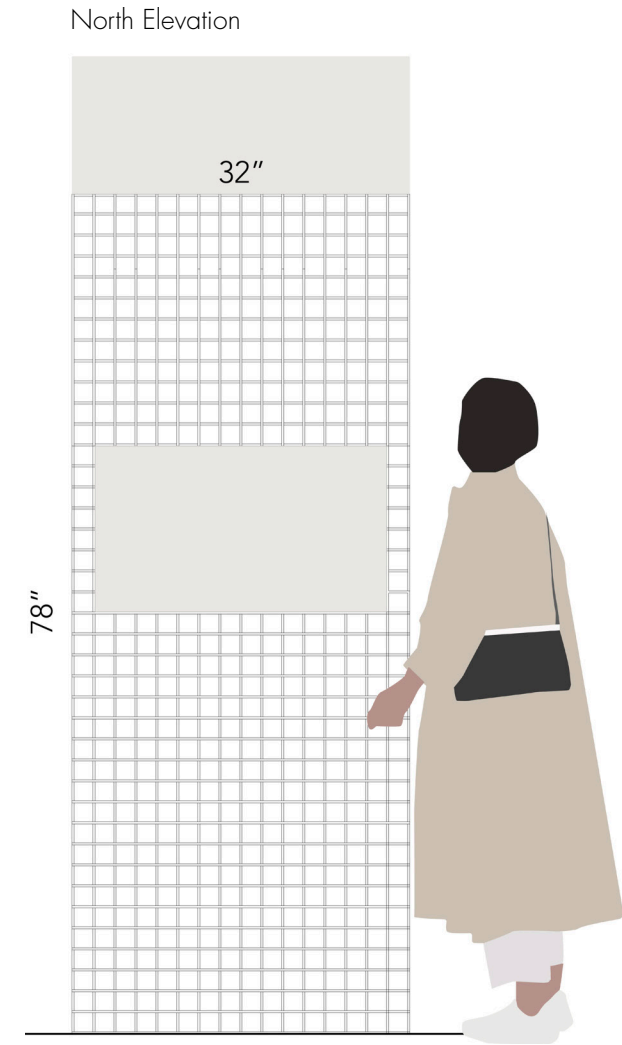
The part is about architecture details. I choose an entrance and staircase of a unit and do interventions inside. Since space for this part is very tight, all installations are thin and light. I'll mainly show details of doors, ceiling decorations and windows, especially patterns on it. Info panel will be next to each "exhibit" as for explanations.

Location of the Installation



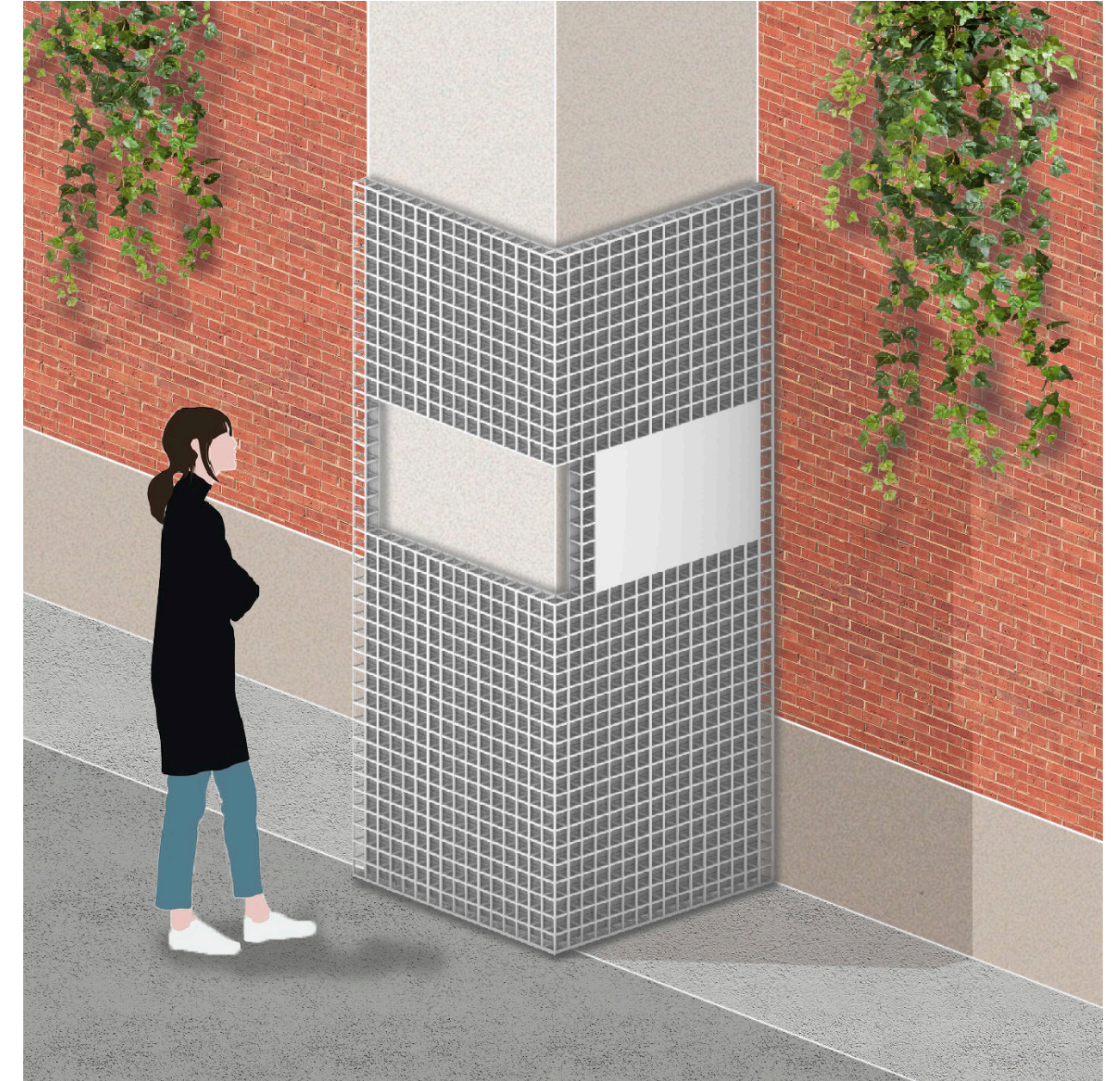
Exterior Exhibition

Observatory Installation: Preservation and Renovation



Location of the Installation

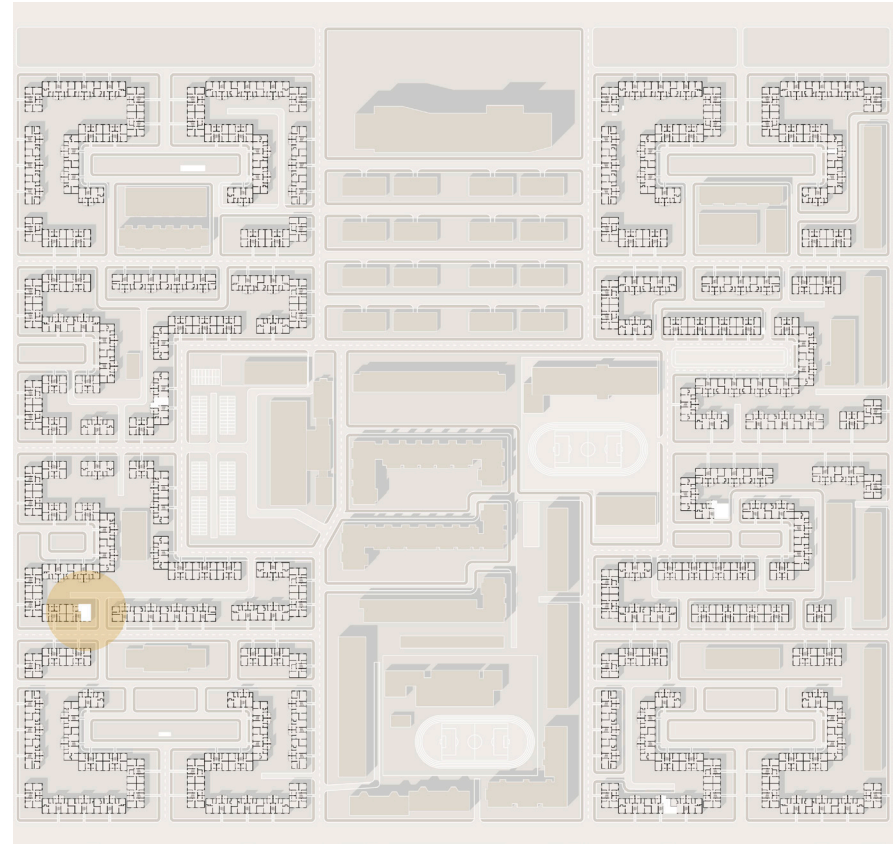
The sixth section is about preservation and renovation. Because buildings of my site has new supporting concrete frame structure out of the original brick walls after the earthquake in 1970s, so I want to introduce this new structure in this topic. The main idea is still frame out the concrete column.



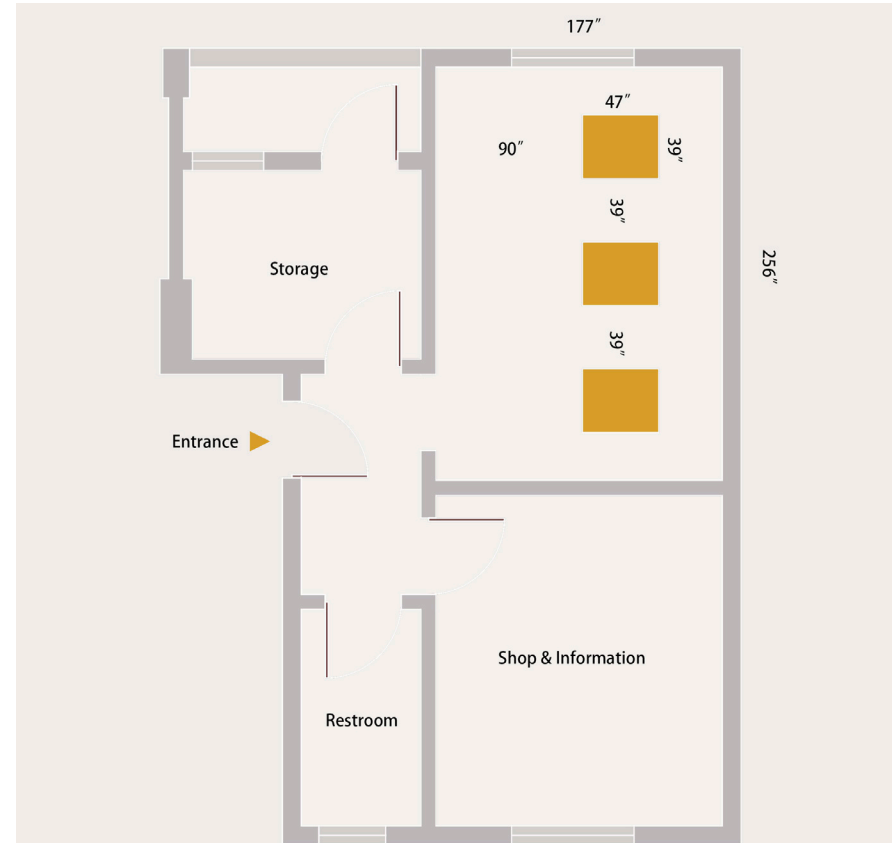
Interior Exhibition

1. Design: Historical Backgrounds of Urban Design

Location of the Installation



Plan of the Exhibition



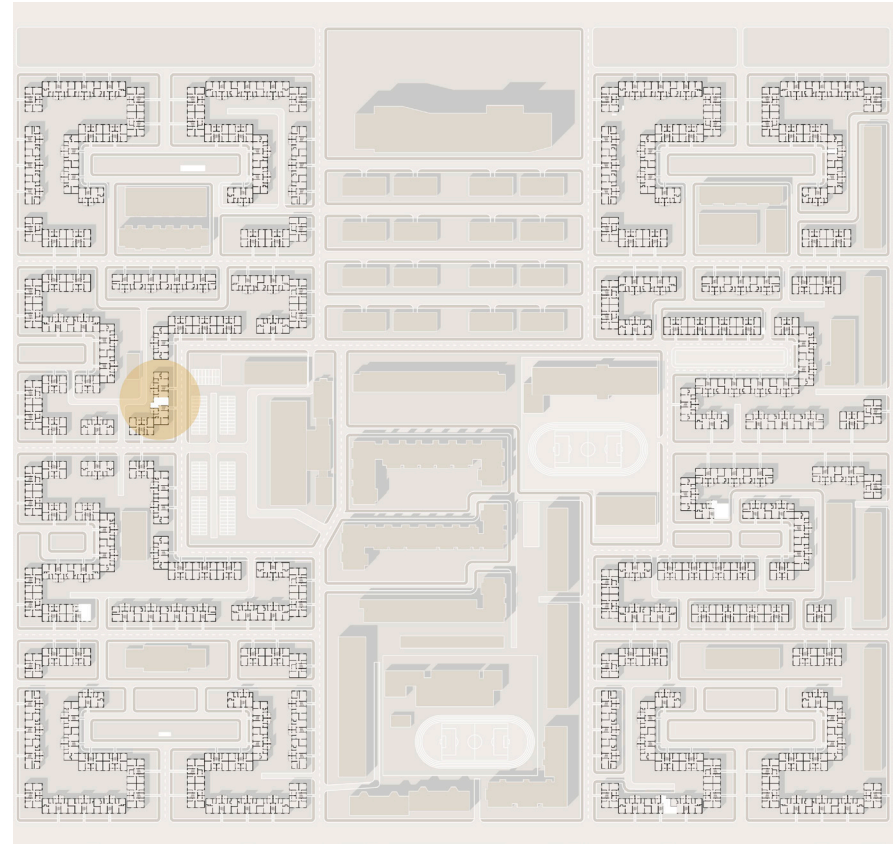
The second section is about historical background of the design. Since many ideas that include in the design of my site were learning and developing from other western country, so in this part, I'd like people to learn the historical background by opening the panel that includes the design of my site, and find out more informations from different aspects, such as urban design, construction method and the combination of the interior layouts.



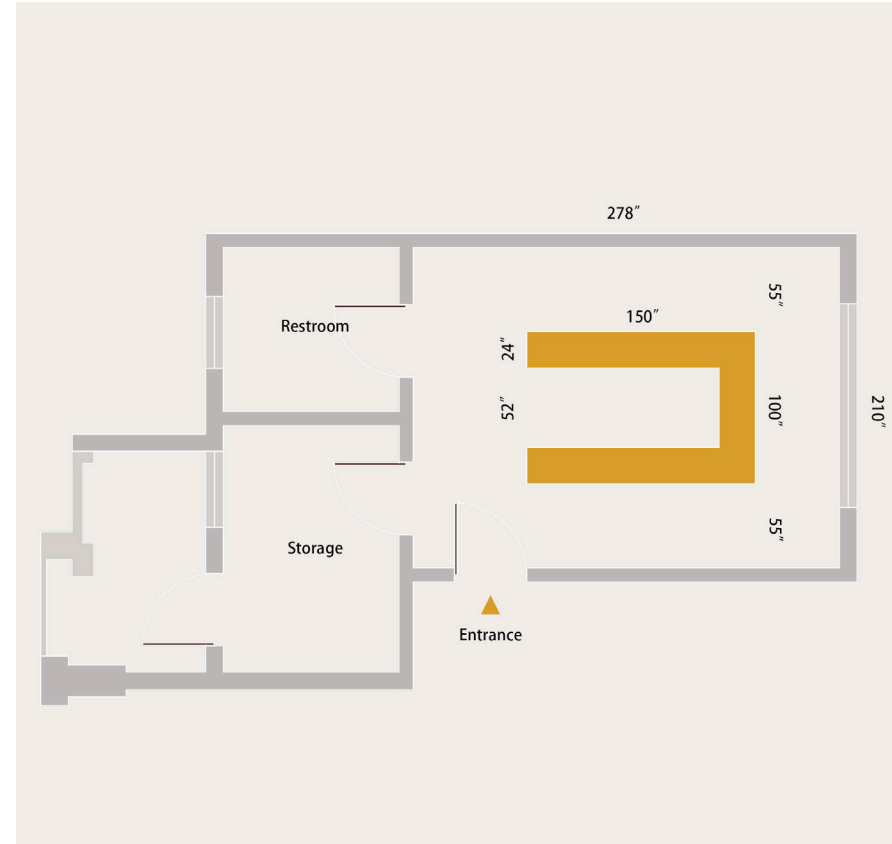
Interior Exhibition

1. Design: Influences on Chinese Urban Planning

Location of the Installation



Plan of the Exhibition

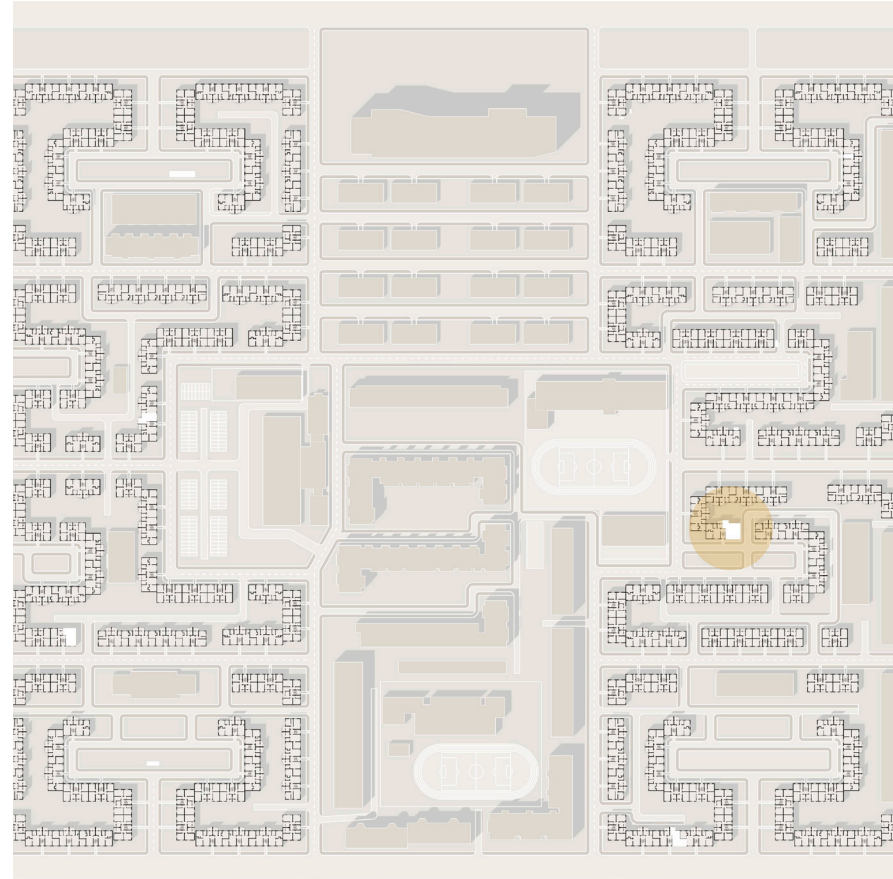


The third section is about influences on Chinese urban planning. I want to use a kind of timeline to explain this topic, so I choose a u shape displaying surface for it. The timeline is from my research to the site, which can be found in page 34.

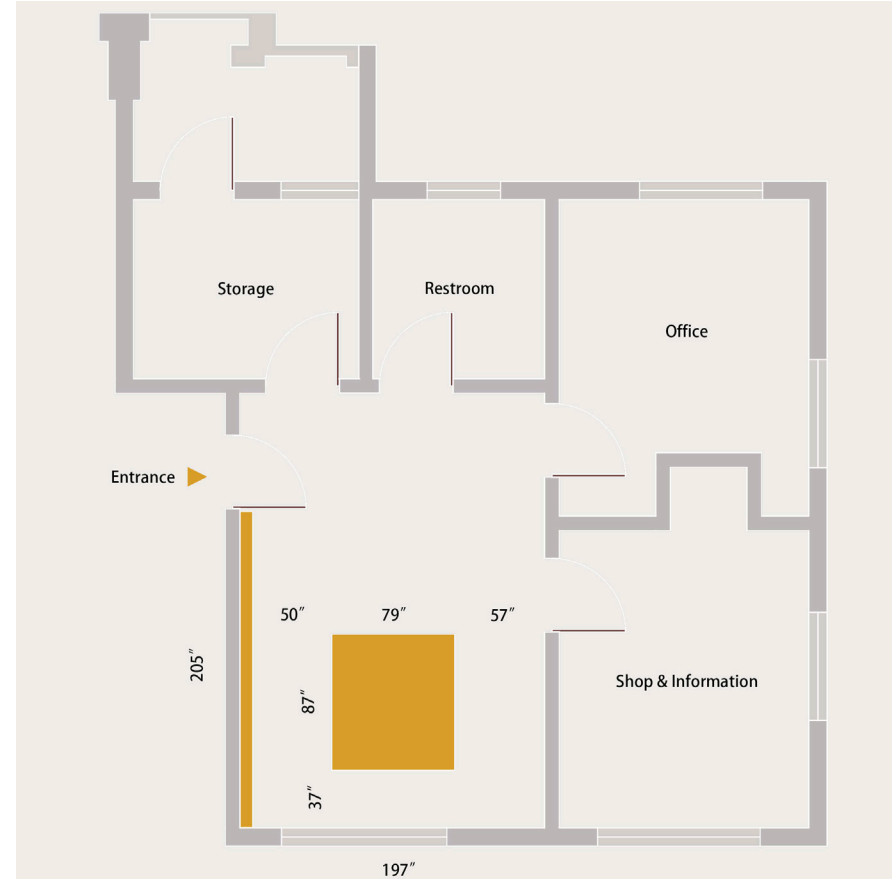
Interior Exhibition

1. Design: Interior Layouts

Location of the Installation



Plan of the Exhibition



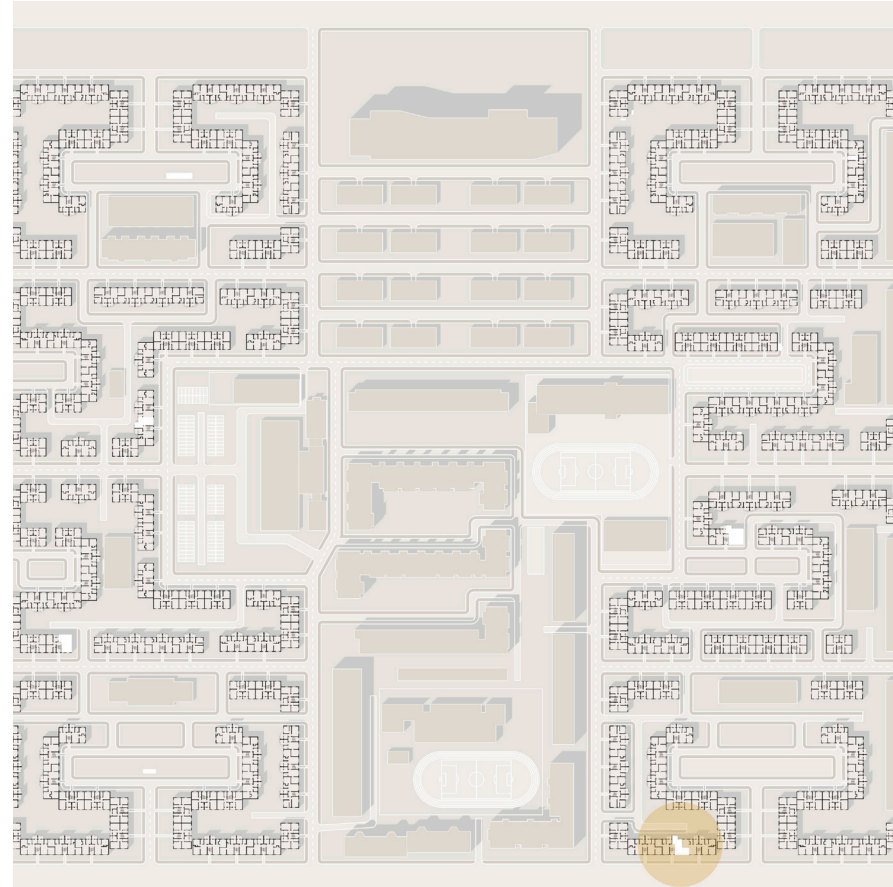
The seventh section is about interior layout. Though this is a huge neighborhood with so many apartments inside, only several types of interior layouts are used, and architects just use different combination of those layouts to create variety shapes of the building, which is amazing. So in this exhibition, wall graphic will talk about different types or interior layouts and the principle of combining them together. The Table in the middle will give visitors many wooden pieces that represent volumes of each type of apartment and will let people try to combine them together based on the principle we give on the wall.



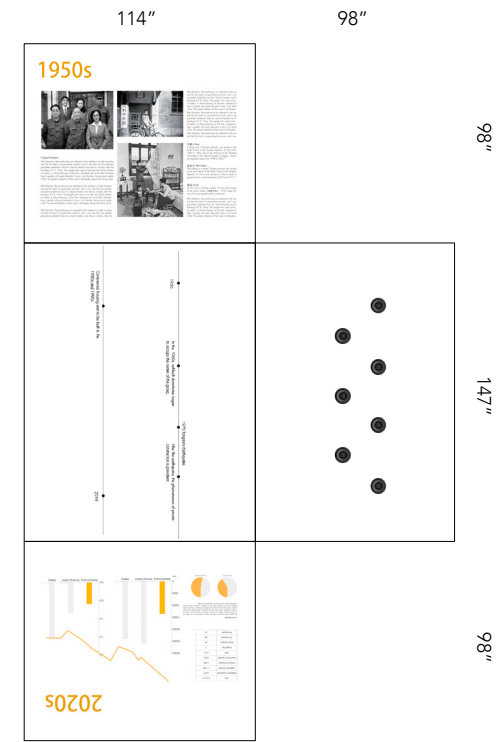
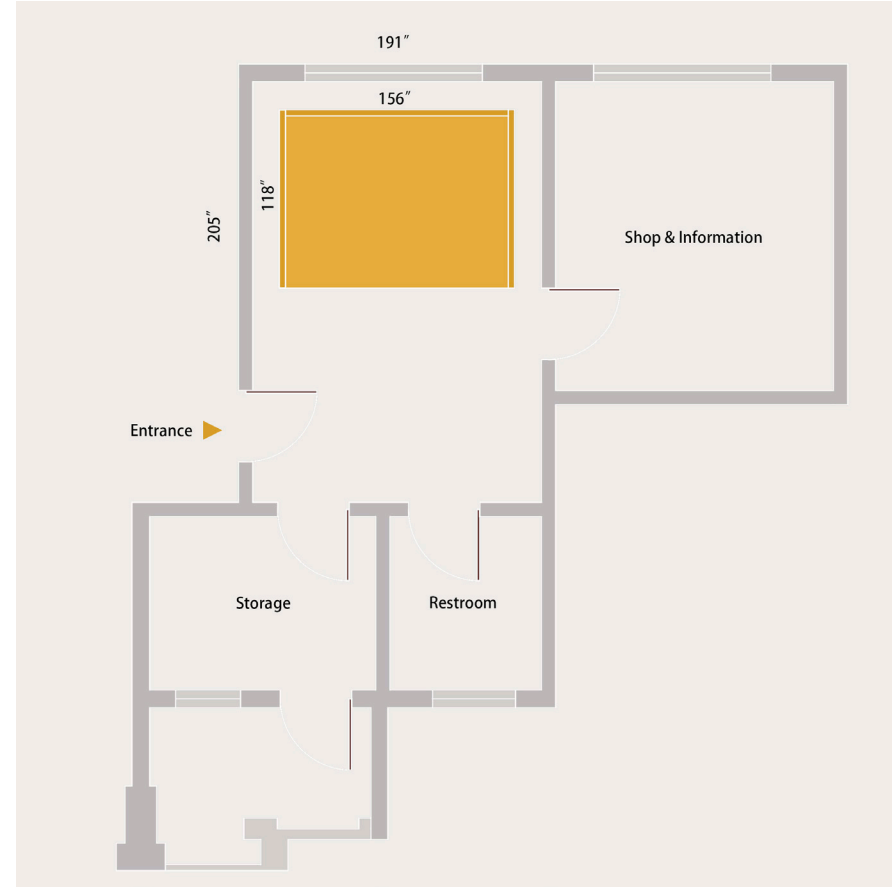
Interior Exhibition

2. Social Aspects: Residents

Location of the Installation



Plan of the Exhibition



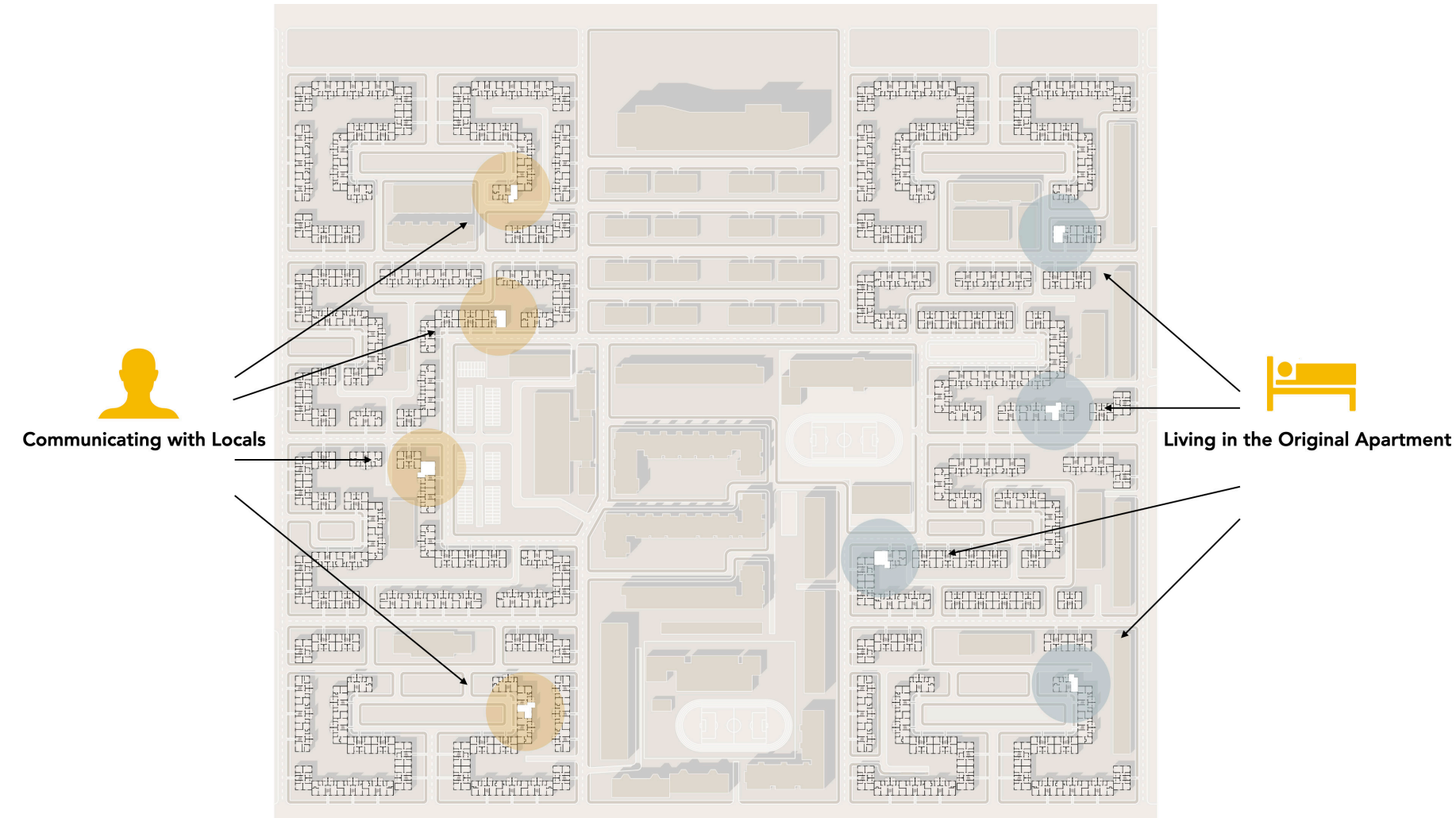
Expanded View of the Graphic

The eighth section is about residents. What I want to show in this exhibition is mainly 2 points: one is the change of the resident, and the other is how resident think about this change. In this 4 sides space, two walls that are opposite will talk about residents in different time period. The floor which connects these two walls will explain some reasons that cause this change. The other wall will have some speakers, and each speaker will be an audio with a talk by a resident.



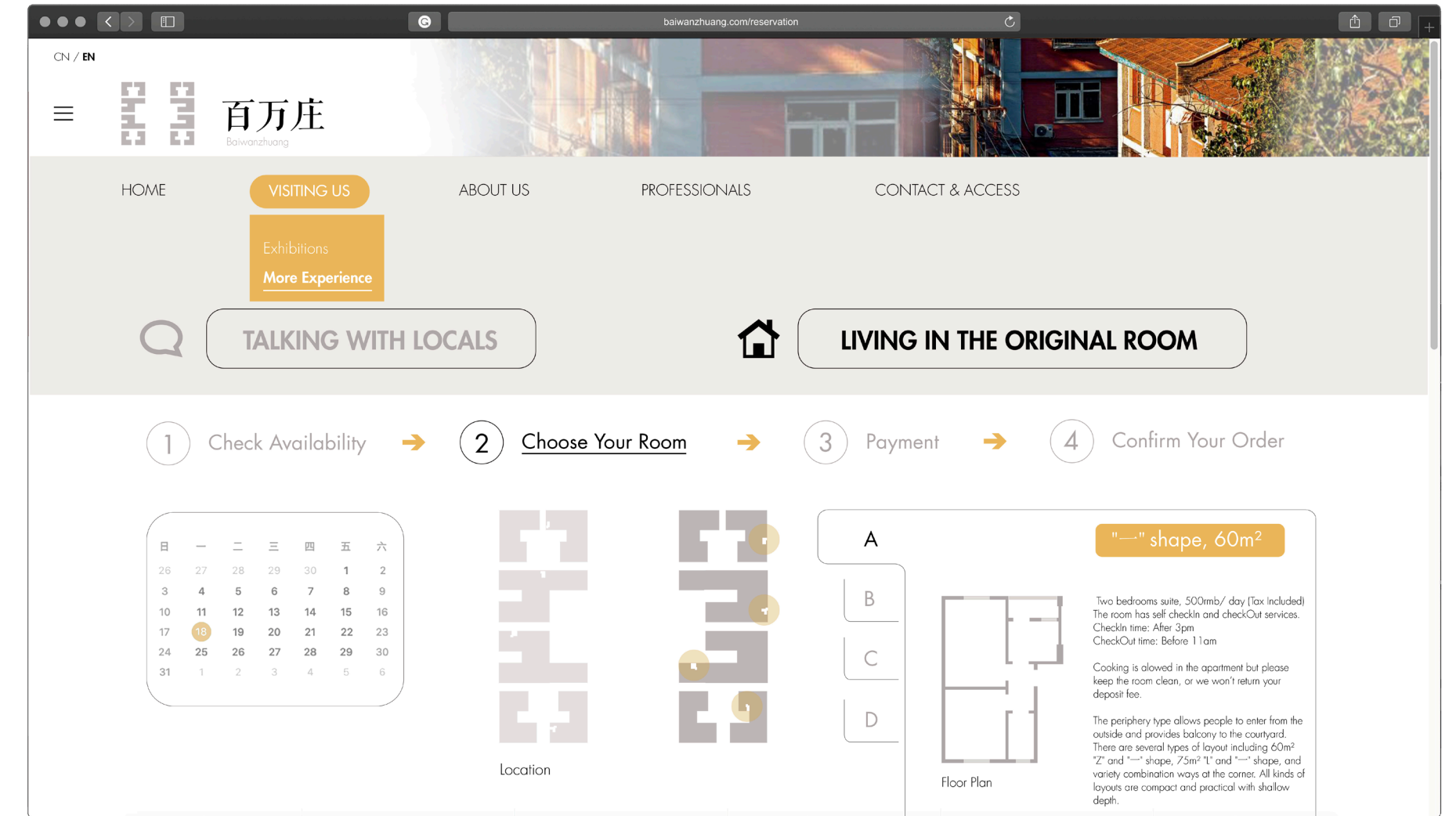
Interior Exhibition

3. More Experience



We also provide more experience of the site, and this is optional. Basically it will be mainly 2 choices, one is talking with locals, and the other is living in the original apartment. All these two choices should be booked online before.

There will be an official website of this museum and people can finish their reservations through it. Within the website, all information about the site and the exhibition can be also found.



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THANK YOU