

Protection and Utilization of Famous Gardens in the Development of Modern Cities

Zhang, Yonglai* · Ruan, Yanni*

*Shanghai Landscape Architecture Design Institute, Shanghai200031

Abstract

Contradictions often occur between the process of urban modernization and protection of history and culture, which have become the topics of current studies. The development of a city has its past, present and future while history and culture have their continued process. Culture is the sediment of history, left among buildings and merged in life. Exerting a subtle influence on the construction of a city and behaviors of citizens, culture is very important to the urban construction and is also the soul of a city and its buildings. Culture is closely bound up with inhabitants' life and the key to protect well the cultural features is to protect well historical and cultural venues. Qushuiyuan Garden is a venue for local folklore activities. The programming holds that folklore, historical and humane sceneries should be protected and left to our coming generations.

Key Words : Historical Garden, History, Culture, The Soul Of A City, Protection And Utilization

There are five historical gardens in Shanghai, namely the Yuyuan Garden in Shanghai, the Ancient Yiyuan Garden in Nanxiang, the Qiuxiapu Garden in Jiading, the Zuibaichi Garden in Songjiang, and the Qushuiyuan Garden in Qingpu. The present writer participated in the reconstruction of the Qushuiyuan Garden in Qingpu and had a survey of the social, economical and environmental effects of the five historical gardens in Shanghai. Currently all these five historical gardens have the following existing problems:

(1) The Yuyuan Garden is located in the brisk section of the city center. It holds a very favorable geographical location, integrated with the commercial culture in the vicinity and having considerable economical, social and environmental effects.

(2) The Ancient Yiyuan Garden is located on the

outskirts of Nanxiang Town. In cooperation with the reconstruction of the old town, more and more developers are vying with each other in grabbing the land there. The peripheral area of the Ancient Yiyuan Garden is already surrounded by commerce, residential areas and villas. The nearest villa buildings are only three meters to the north wall of the Ancient Yiyuan Garden.

(3) The Qiuxiapu Garden is located in the city area of Jiading with many commercial buildings in its vicinity. Though considerations were given to the conformity of the architectural style of the Qiuxiapu Garden in the planning, the height and proportion of the commercial buildings are hard to control.

(4) The Zuibaichi Garden is located in the ancient city area of Songjiang. The streets in the ancient city were widened in the reconstruction and the original

proportional size of the Garden is shrunken without people's knowing it. The size beauty of the Garden in the narrow lane can be no more embodied. Furthermore, shops and residences were built one after another in the surrounding areas. For coordinating with the street size, the entrance to the Zuibaichi Garden was reconstructed but the size was not in coordination with the original size.

(5) The Qushuiyuan Garden in Qingpu has the similar problem.

In summing up the above mentioned historical parks, there are universally the following problems existing:

(1) During the reconstruction and development of the old city, all developers made use of the influences of the social and environmental effects of these historical gardens to promote their own products.

(2) The local government did not take measures strong enough to control and manage those practices that were against the planning and the style and features in the protected area.

(3) The economical effect of the historical gardens is not ideal with the exception of the considerable effect of the Yuyuan Garden in the urban area of Shanghai.

(4) The fund source for renovation and management is mainly from the allocated funds of the government and income of entrance ticket. The managers of the gardens took the measure of breaking the garden wall to run stores for financing effect. Without their knowing it, they caused certain damage to the historical gardens.

The present write had the honor to participate in the whole process of reconstruction planning of the Quishuiyuan Garden. The Quishuiyuan Garden is located in the central area of the old urban area of the Western part of Qingpu District, Shanghai Municipality. With the rapid steps of reconstruction of the old city, the protection and utilization of the traditional

culture in historical section has become the concern of social public. There are two reasons for it. The first is the enhancement of people's living standard increases the demands of cultural life and the consciousness of protecting traditional culture and humane scenery is increasing with each year. And the second is the tourism of short-distance suburbs promotes the development process, from the angle of economic effect, of the protection and utilization of historical culture, historic site and relics.

At present, the Construction Commission and Planning Bureau of Shanghai Municipality have worked out several protective measures and standards for strengthening the protection of historical sections. Detailed definite articles and interpretations have been laid down in the general planning and regulations for the administration of Shanghai Municipality and No. 26 "Measures for the Administration of Relics Protection Administration" issued by the Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China. Compared with a few years ago, greater progress has been made in the respect of expending, building up streets in the style of Ming or Qing Dynasties endlessly. However, there are still many problems in the respect of protection and utilization, for instance, the destruction of historical gardens caused by over-development of tourism and the environmental destruction resulted from large-scale real estate in the peripheral areas of historical gardens. In consideration of the importance of protecting and utilizing historical gardens, it is of great urgency not only to protect their historic style and features and the perceivable residential environments but also to promote their sustainable development and display their even greater influence and vitality. Efforts should be made simultaneously to the maximum to maintain their traditional cultural way and custom and to pay attention to the operation and implementation of the planning.

I. THE STATUS OF QISHUIYUAN GARDEN OF QINGPU

1. The General Situation of Historical Evolution

The Quishuiyuan Garden is one of the five historical gardens in Shanghai Municipality, known for its smallness and exquisiteness, as well as for its elegance and primitive simplicity. It occupies a total space of over thirty *mu* with 15% of water body. The buildings inside the garden feature in black tires, white walls and black bricks in excellent proportional scale. In the garden, there are fifty-three historical trees and famous wood species, a mass of branches and leaves, flowers in full bloom and fruits hanging heavy on trees. The garden is well-known for "cherries in gaudy attire in spring, lotus flowers like bathing beauties in summer, golden and luxuriant osmanthus in autumn and bright and resplendent winter sweet in bitter coldness". All year round flowers are in blossom with osmanthus ranking first with its sweet scent for visitors to bring back home the scented gold millet. When in the garden, one will have the feeling of being in urban hills and woods, which embodies the realm of the landscaping art of ancient China and gives people an enjoyment of

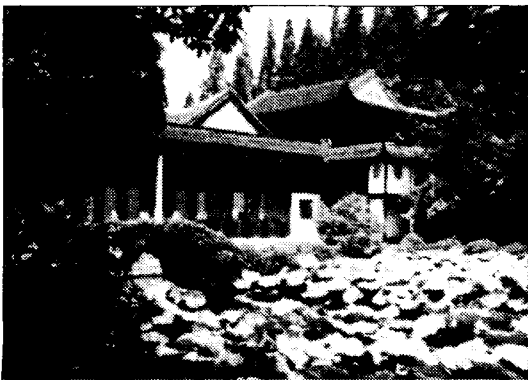


Figure 1. Nuclear Protection Areas, the Lotus Pond and the Xiyu Bridge



Figure 2. Nuclear Protection Areas, Mino Haoliang and Yingxiting Pavilion

beauty(See Figure 1 and Figure 2.)

The garden was built in 1745 in the Qing Dynasty, used to be the affiliated garden of Town God's Temple called Lingyuan Garden. At the initial stage of construction, in addition to the main buildings like Youyuetang Hall, Deyouxuan Veranda, Gexunlou Tower and Yinghuige Pavilion, a pond was dug with rocks piled up in it. In 1767, a boat-shaped pavilion was built along the pond and two more buildings, a tower and Ninghetang Hall, were built. In 1784, the pond was dredged, rockeries were piled up, red lotus was planted, embankment was piled up and a bridge named Happy Rain was built across the pond. By the embankment a pavilion named Yongcuiting Pavilion was setup and rockeries were piled up to link up with the long embankment. After forty-two years, the garden with twenty-four scenes was finished. Every rock, every stream, every pavilion and every tower - all is attractive.

In 1798, Mr. Liu Yunfang, a scholar of Jiangsu, paid a visit to the garden at the invitation of Yang Dongping, a county magistrate. On seeing the beautiful scenery of the garden, Mr.Liu changed the original name of the garden, the Lingyuan Garden, into the Qushuiyuan Garden, imitating an allusion related to Wang Xizhi. From 1883 to 1900, a pond for freeing captive fishes and tortoises was dug and a



Figure 3. Youjietang Hall and Inner Court of Gexunlou Tower

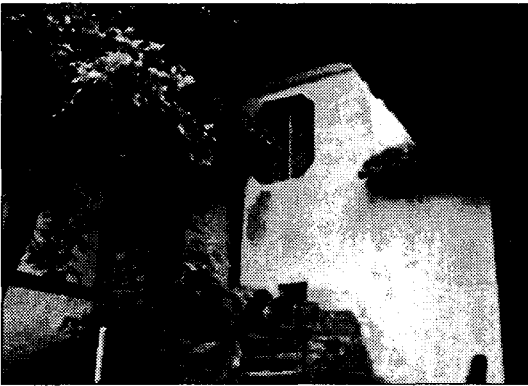


Figure 4. Inner Court of Yushulou Tower



Figure 5. Century-old Dragon Claw-shaped Chinese Scholar Tree

Flower-god Hall was built. As the Qushuiyuan Garden and Town God's Temple were integrated and funds for restoration of the garden came from the

"one-penny donation" of worshippers, the garden was also called "One-penny Garden". (Figure 3, Figure 4 and Figure 5)

2. Features of General Layout

The general layout of the Qushuiyuan Garden is rather regular with the Ninghetang Hall in the center and the Juetang Hall and the Flower God Hall standing on the left and right respectively. The arrangement of three halls on the horizontal axis is very seldom seen in the Chinese classical garden. They are separated with walls but linked together with a winding path. The vertical axis takes the Ninghetang Hall as the main building with the Ninghetang Hall in the front, the Qinglaishanfang House in the back and a rockery and two ponds (the lotus pond and the water lily pond) in the middle. The layout of the garden landscape takes the lake area as the center to expand the sceneries around the lake, with each hall close to the water and each pavilion standing by the pond. Those who visit the garden have to go around the lake and will have a feeling of "water after water running in the deep courtyards and the deep courtyards leading to quiet seclusions".

3. The Peripheral Status of the Historical Garden and The Current Existing Problems

The peripheral environments of the historical garden are occupied by commercial culture, a great damage to the garden in visual sense and the overall style and features. It is fortunate for the Qushuiyuan Garden to have the buildings around it demolished in the reconstruction of the old city for restoring the space for citizens' relaxation.

The buildings inside the garden have not been

sufficiently maintained for a long time. The materials used for maintenance are not in compliance with the requirements of classical gardens. For instance, cement is used for plastering some pavilions and grounds and concrete is used for railings and window lattices, losing the original style of classical architecture. The materials used for paving the garden paths are all at random, failing to show the features of a historical garden. The materials used for plant scenery are mixed with western plants and the garden of potted landscape is in a shabby state. The



Figure 6. Present Status of Jingxinting Pavilion



Figure 7. Scenery of *Metasequoia glyptostroboides* Forest inside Potted Landscape Garden

children's paradise facilitated with modern amusement facilities in the nuclear area of history and culture is not in conformity with the planning of an ancient garden and affects the environment and atmosphere of that area. The Jingxinlu Cottage should be an ancient building but the existing architectural style is a modern building, far away from the functional requirements of an ancient garden. (See Figure 6 and Figure 7)

II. DESIGNING CONCEPT FOR THE PLANNING

1. The Relationship between Reconstruction Planning and the Status

The general layout and composition of vegetation, garden paths and passages of the Qushuiyuan Garden are already formed and in existence. The issue of how to handle the relationship between the reconstruction and the status can't be neglected. In case it is not well handled, it's possible to try to be clever only to end up with a blunder. A discreet attitude should be adopted for the planning and the following two principles have to be defined. (See Figure 8)

The principle of one-time planning and implementation by states. The strong points of the natural surroundings of the garden should be fully displayed while the insufficiencies of the cultural connotation in the existing landscape space should be made up.

The principle of "protection, penetration, micro readjustment and utilization". This principle is through the reconstruction and protection of the existing historical and cultural scenery area (the nuclear area) to penetrate the whole garden of the history and culture of the Qushuiyuan Garden and to embody the following two concepts:

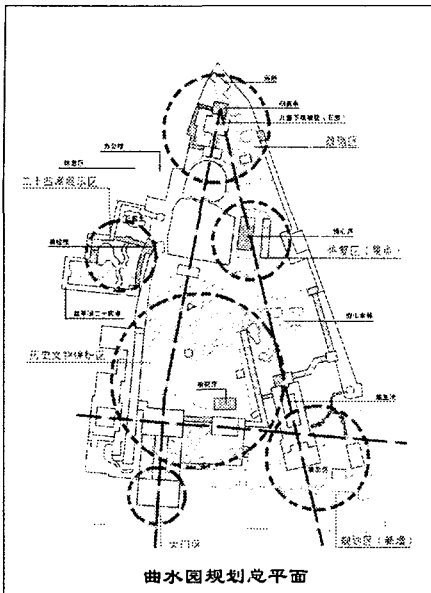


Figure 8. General Plane of Planning

- The penetration of archeological style and scenery concept: and
- The penetration of the original designing concept of the Qushuiyuan Garden

2. The Protection and Reconstruction of Traditional Historical Vein

The humane scenery and folklore culture in regional culture are the soul of traditional historical vein. They are represented not only in the morph of



Figure 9. Continued Annals of Qingpu County Qushuiyuan Garden

traditional architecture and ancient city but also in the intangible cultural heritage of cultural customs and folklore art.

The protection of the historical vein of the Qushuiyuan Garden is based on the existing status and written record (Figure 9, the woodcut version). The planning will emphasize the making of scenery images, merging sceneries in the artistic conception of

- Between the scenic areas, key points should be made prominent, the essence should be shown and the integrated style should be identical: and
- The space in the garden should be intersected with each other, combined together, linked up and divided. Emphasis should be laid on both opening up and closing together, the feeling of rising and falling series as well as the cohesive force of space.
- For plant disposition, the existing plant scenery should be taken as the dominant scenery with the readjustment of plants under stress as the key point by increasing the varieties of flower shrubbery. For instance, prunus mume and malus halliana can be disposed under evergreen trees: camellias and rhododendron simsii under deciduous trees: perennial root and corm flowers can be used for ground-cover plants: and those local tree varieties and tree varieties frequently planted in classical gardens such as pines, bamboos, plums, elms and Celtis tetrandra ssp.sinensis can be used to create even more natural ecological environments. (Figure 10): and
- The style of scenery building of the garden is where the essence of the Qushuiyuan Garden lies. The overall and detailed size of the buildings should be appropriate, and special attention should be given to the traditional style of regional culture. The unique cultural connotation of primitive simplicity should be explored and the function of covered corridor should be appropriately displayed in the respect of dividing the sceneries in space organization.

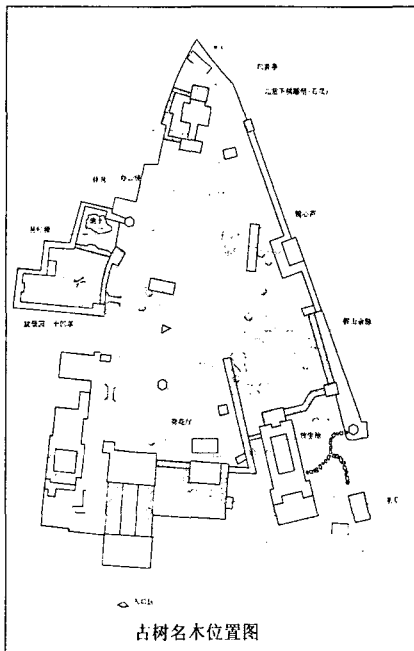


Figure 10. Location Map of Historical Trees and Famous Wood Species in Qushuiyuan Garden

III. REFLECTIONS ON PROTECTION AND UTILIZATION OF ANCIENT GARDENS

1. Protection and Development

In view of the protection of ancient gardens in our country, the difficulty is how to handle well the relationship between protection and development. The present writer holds that protection is the first importance in dealing with historical heritage and relics. But it does not follow that no alternations can be made at all. Protection without utilization is not the strategy for protection. On August 3, Mayor Han Zheng of Shanghai Municipality delivered a speech at the "Meeting to Protect the Outstanding Buildings of Shanghai Municipality". He laid special emphasis on the all-round considerations of the protection of the historical cultural landscape areas as well as the

outstanding historical buildings with the surrounding environments, a concept that opening up and new construction means development while protection and reconstruction also means development. In France, the historic buildings regulated by decrees are inseparable with the surrounding environments. They should be protected at the same time. As their historic values, aesthetic values and cultural values can't be separated from the urban textures, it is defined that a radius of 500 meters around historic buildings belongs to the sphere for protection.

The World Heritage Convention also mentions the measures of "protection" and "display" for cultural heritages. "Display" is a kind of enjoyment, utilization and reference. Therefore, priority should be given to the renovation and protection of historical gardens but attention should also be given to the demands of modern social functions and development. The purpose of development is not merely for economical, social and environmental effects but for the continuation and consistency of traditional history and culture. We should inherit the past and usher in the future so that the coming generations can understand the process of historical development and keep the balance between protection and development.

2. To Abide By The Measures for Protective and the Laws and Rules Laid Down for The Protection

- It is necessary to set up the protective consciousness of the public, particularly in the renovation of the ancient city, and to abide by the laws and rules promulgated by the related departments of the state to protect historical and cultural heritages and relics;
- The planning for the protection and utilization of historical gardens should be feasible and operational. We must be a little far-sighted to avoid

large-scale demolition and large-scale construction. Meticulous surveys should be made for different scenic zones and feature spots, different measures for protection and renovation should be taken, and emphasis should be laid on utilizing the original environmental sceneries so as to reduce the cost for renovation and improve the feasibility of the planning. This is the duty of every planner and architect as well as the policy makers of city administration.

- The government and the related local departments should be clearly aware that the protection and development of historical gardens provide vitality and places for inheriting traditional culture and custom for the renovation of the old city and the development of local tourism. It also helps the old city to develop its local tourism and enhance its brand effect.

With the development of modern economy, the renovation of the historical gardens in our country has suffered quite an unnecessary destruction of buildings. The destruction of the historical gardens in the suburbs of Shanghai is very serious, making people worry very much, for instances, the phenomenon of neglecting the laws and rules for the protection of relics, the contradiction between the development of tourism and real estate pursuing for short-term effects urged by market economy and the demand of the broad masses of citizens, and the contradiction between the modernization of urban development and the backwardness of old material facilities of the old city. Summing up the above phenomenon and problems, we have to study and explore, from the viewpoints of theory and practice, the correct understanding of the connotation and substance of historical and cultural places in the development of a modern city as well as the correct understanding of the dialectical relationship of making the past serve the present.

The general urban planning of Shanghai municipality stipulates that in planning the protection of historical cities and relics the relationship between development and protection as well as the relationship between development and reservation must be appropriately handled. It must be in compliance with the demands of modern life and work on the one hand and maintain the original unique style and features on the other. Attention must be paid to inheriting and carrying forward the historical veins by full utilization and rational development so that development and protection can be unified in a harmonious way.

Those illegal behaviors that lead to the loss of humane landscape, traditional style and features and folklore culture for making use of the effects of historical gardens and getting lost in the development, not only should the government interfere with but the public opinion should also expose them.

To any country, the development of a modern city and the continuation and inheritance of historical and traditional culture as well as humane scenery are of no little importance, let alone China, a centuries-old cultural power with a history of several thousand years. In the construction for the development of modern and contemporary city, the protection and utilization of the natural environments, ecological and humane landscape and the inheritance of the traditional culture of the historical gardens are important topics to discuss.

We hold that the purpose of protecting history, culture and historical gardens is not merely for meeting people's yearning for the traditional culture and humane landscape, but for continuing our culture and the essence of life in material and in spirit. The cost of destroying historical relics and traditional culture should not be used for the precondition of modernization. Neither history nor relics is reversible. The three aspects of protection, renovation and

utilization of historical gardens should supplement and complement one another, interacting one another and beneficial to one another so that modernization and tradition could exist side by side. Efforts should be made to explore measures of rational protection and utilization so that the traditional places could be continued for existence.

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