

CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT METHODS OF HISTORIC VILLAGES: A CASE STUDY IN CHINA *

Wenjun Hou¹, Tianyang Ge²

¹ First Author: PhD Candidate, School of Architecture, Southeast University, hwjseu@qq.com

² Corresponding Author: PhD Candidate, School of Architecture, Southeast University, getianyang@qq.com

Abstract: *At the early stage of the conservation of historic towns and villages in China, government basically focused on protecting the material space. At that time, tourist industry did great effect to help the historic towns and villages to survive. But, in the process of the rapid urbanization in China, Some of them are turned into tourist attractions without control. The contradiction between protection and development become more and more significant. They are facing the problem: how to balance all the factors? This paper studied a typical case in Jiangsu province, China.*

Frist the paper summarized the general planning methods during the main stage of conservation development in China. Secondly, the paper studied the current status of the typical case, and generalized the problems under the current conservation planning system, such as lack of safeguard mechanism to carry out planning, stress of land-use transformation, excessive tourism economy, and losing of the traditional lifestyle. Thirdly, the paper analysed the need and effect of different members involved in this case. At last, to solve these problems and balance different kinds of need, the paper presented three planning methods: first, put tourism land-use outside the core protection area. Second, set up the environment protection area, to avoid the stress of sprawling of urban area. Third, develop suitable and small-scale commercial activities. And the paper put forward two strategies: firstly, government should pay more attention on the carrying out of the planning, and give more rights to the local groups. Secondly, carry out dynamic planning.

Keywords: conservation and development methods, historic villages, China

1 Research background

The conservation of historic villages of China started at the end of 1980s. Investigating the material space was the core work of the protection that time, which only some scholars took part in. Not until the beginning of 21st century, Ministry of Construction and State Administration of Cultural Heritage carried out the evaluation of the historic towns and villages (Qiu, 2014). Since then, 276 villages have been given the title of Historic Villages of China. This makes all levels of government and departments pay attention to the conservation of historic villages.

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In 2013, the Ministry of Construction issued The Conservation Planning Requirements of Historic Towns and Villages, which include planning content, result request, investigation and evaluation. This realized the legalization and standardization of the conservation planning of historic villages. But how to make the historic villages develop sustainably is still a problem. And this problem becomes more serious nowadays. Both government and planners are searching for the efficient methods.

2 Conservation planning methods review

2.1 First stage

This stage is the sprout period , which started from the early 1980s to 1994. At the beginning, some scholars brought forward the thought of conservation planning of historic villages. The studies almost focused on the forming process of the whole village, characteristic of the material space and cultural heritage(Liu, 1998). For a long time, the conservation planning was confined to the investigation of present situation.

Near the end of this stage, multilevel conservation method was proposed by Yisan Ruan (Huang, 2014). Based on the investigation of architecture heritage, historic village was divided into three conservation areas in this method, which were core conservation area, general conservation area and environmental coordination area. Each of them had different protection intensity and contents. This kind of method helped to protect the historic villages in good condition.

2.2 Second stage

This stage is the foundation period , which started from 1994 to 2003. In this stage, the central government put more emphasis on the conservation of historic villages. And they started to study how to formulate the standard for it. In 1994, The Specification of Conservation Planning of Historic City was issued, which the conservation of historic villages was included. And the conservation planning of historic villages adopted the conservation pattern of historic cities(Yang, 2009b).

During this stage, the conservation planning method was further improved. Conservation framework was formed, which were conservation elements, conservation theme and conservation structure. This method was derived from the conservation of historic cities. It further improved the multilevel conservation method. And it became more comprehensive. It also influenced the formulation of planning standard.

2.3 The third stage

This stage is the development period , which started from 2003 to 2013. Since 2003, Ministry of Construction and State Administration of Cultural Heritage have carried out the evaluation of the historic towns and villages of China. This symbolized the conservation of historic villages entered a

new stage. In another word, the central government used this method to encourage the society to recognize the importance of conservation of historic villages. In 2008, the Conservation Regulation of Historic Cities, Towns and Villages were promulgated, which stipulated that historic villages can't get the title without the conservation planning finished (Huang, 2014). This helped to encourage the local government to carry out the conservation planning.

In this stage, the central government integrated the core content of conservation planning of historic villages. At the same time, China entered a phase of rapid urbanization. The contradiction between protection and development become more and more significant. Because of this, a lot of scholars began to looking for new approaches. According to the research data, the research mainly focused on building science, culture and tourism (Huang, 2014). Tourism has become an economic method to help the historic villages to survive. But this economic method created problems, such as environmental pollution, recession of local culture and so on (Yang, 2009a).

2.4 The fourth stage

This stage is the adjustment period, which started from 2013. In 2013, the Conservation Planning Requirements of Historic Towns and Villages were enacted. It standardized the conservation planning of historic villages. At the same time, planners started to try new methods to solve the new problems, such as establishing GIS conservation database, using eco-technology and so on.

3 Typical case study

The paper studied the Dou villages in Nanjing, which is located in the southeast coast of China. Because of the rapid urbanization, this historic village is at the edge of destroy. And many factors clash and work together in it.

3.1 Location

Dou village is located at the southeast of the main city, which is one of the economic prosperous cities in China. It is populated by descendants of the workers who built the Nanjing city from Ming Dynasty. The history of the village is connected with the city (Figure 1). Because of the spread of cities, it is facing the stress of land-use transformation. At the same time, it is facing the tendency to become a tourist attraction, because the will of the local government, who has made some of the historic villages tourist attractions.



Figure 1 Location of Dou Village and Heritages Built by Natives of Dou Village

3.2 Historic factors

Historic factors include historic buildings, historic streets and alleys, historic environment factors and ancient trees. According to the investigation, there are 835 buildings in this village, which include 81 historic buildings and 754 normal buildings. All the historic buildings were built before 1980. Because of lack of money, some of them are at the edge of damage, which were made of stones. And they scattered among the normal buildings (Figure 2). For this sake, it s very difficult to get the title of historic villages of China. In other word, it can t get special conservation funds from the central government.

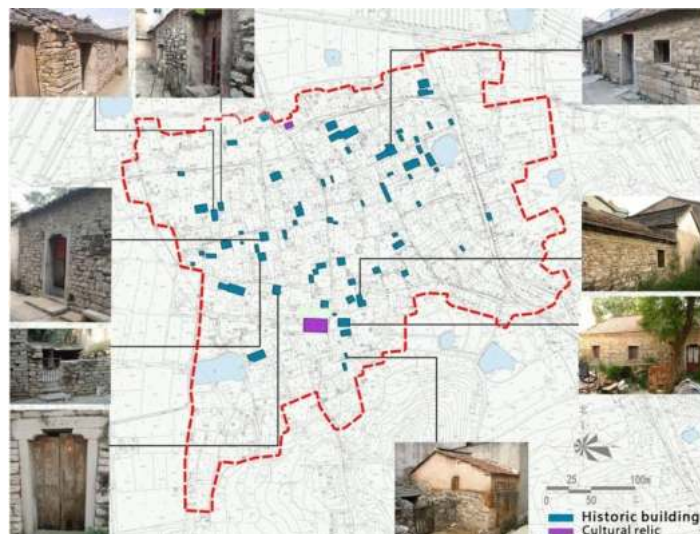


Figure 2 Distribution of Historic Buildings

Unlike the historic buildings, most of the historic streets and alleys are kept in the old way. And this village still is surrounded by farmland and small hills, which helped to avoid being invaded by the city. The other historic environment factors locate in the middle of the village, which include two Cultural Relics of China.

3.3 Land-use and economic condition

According to the survey, 80.92% land of this village is Residential Land, which is 11.24ha (Figure 3). The second-largest land is Road and square land, which is about 11.45% of all. And this village has a small amount of Industrial land, about 2.45%. The others are Municipal utilities land, Cultural relics land and Commercial land. According to further investigation, the stress of land-use transformation is from the outside influence. Because of urban expansion, the land values of the other villages around Dou village increased rapidly. Most of them were turned into high density urban residential land. So the local government and some of residents want to get economic benefits from the land, which is quite attractive.

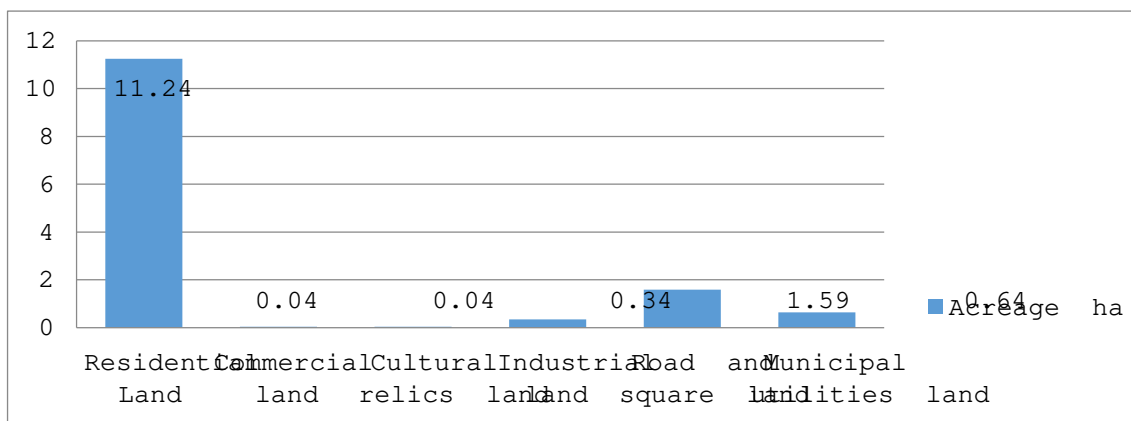


Figure 3 Land Use of Dou Village (2013)

In 2013, the average monthly income per person is 2000RMB. The number of low income people is approximately 62% of all (Figure 4), whose income is below 2000RMB. Some of them rely on agriculture for income, especially the aged. On one hand, agricultural economic helped to protect cultural relics of the village passively. On the other hand, the low income can't fit the need of them all, which result in the disrepair of historic material space. And the number of higher income people is only 13%, whose income is above 3000RMB (Figure 4). All of them work in the city, and live in the village in the evening. The contrast between this village and nearby tourism-based historic villages is so great. Affected by this, local government and some of the residents have a tendency to choose the tourist economy, though tourist economy caused a lot of negative effects in the tourism-based historic villages.

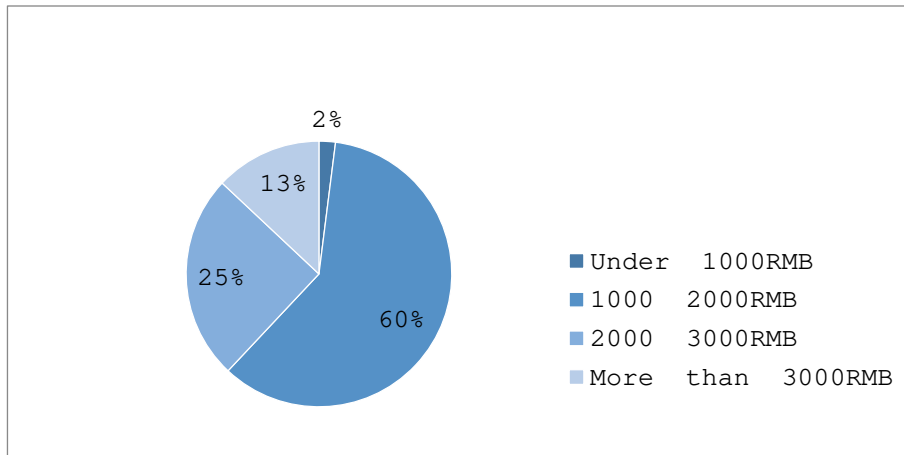


Figure 4 Incomes of Natives in 2013

3.4 Population structure and cultural tradition

According to the official data, there are about 332 households in Dou village, altogether 1040 people. And the number of natives is approximately 98% of all. From the location distribution, 42.4% of the population are located at the west of the village, which is the oldest part of the village. Unlike some tourism-based historic villages, the hollow phenomenon isn't serious in Dou village, though population ageing.

Most of the natives are the descendants of the workers who built the Nanjing city. Some of the traditional festivals are kept here. But the traditional life-style changed a lot. Because of the rise of the industrialized construction way, traditional stone carving skill is on the brink of extinction, which is the most precious cultural heritage of Dou village. Only some old people still keep this skill as a hobby. Losing of cultural heritage and traditional life-style is a widespread problem among historic villages.

4 Major participators study

Almost like other conservation planning of historic villages, major participators are local government, superior planning bureau, native, tourist, protection group and planner in this case. And superior planning bureau, tourist, protection group and planner were most concerned with the protection of the historic factors. But the local government and native wanted to develop economic and improve living conditions. And superior planning bureau and local government were the most powerful actors of all, who offered the funds. The others played a limited role in the process (Figure 5).

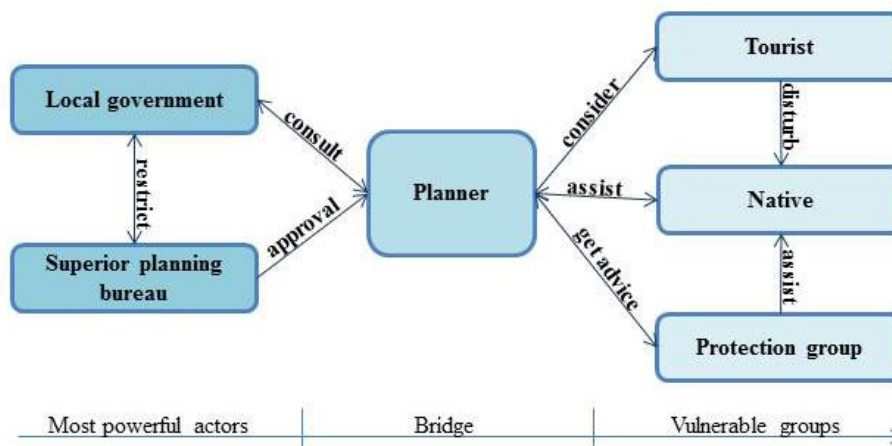


Figure 5 Relationships of Major Participants

4.1 Local government

Local government is one of the most powerful actors in this planning. It not only affords most of the funds for the planning, but also takes charge of the implementation of the programme. So its intention can directly affect the direction of the planning and quality of the conservation work. In this case, the main purpose of local government is economic development. Because tourist economy helped a lot of other villages, it becomes a good choice in the local officers' mind.

4.2 Superior planning bureau

Superior planning bureau is the examination and approval department of conservation planning. It is also a powerful actor in this planning. In this case, approximately one third of the planning fee comes from it. Superior planning bureau and local government restrict each other. On one hand, superior planning bureau want to protect this village from being teared down. On the other hand, it has to respect the will of the local government to get the follow-up financing for the conservation work.

4.3 Planner

Planner is the bridge to connect them all. Planners provide efficient conservation and development methods, which the local government and superior planning bureau both seek. In this case, planners have the same aim with superior planning bureau. But they try to find new planning methods to avoid relying on tourist economy, and pay more attention to the will of the natives.

4.4 Native

Generally speaking, Natives are the most vulnerable actors in the process of planning. In this case, most of the natives wanted to develop economic and improve living conditions. Because of the

possibility of demolition, many of them united to struggle for their own rights. So the local government paid attention to them passively. But only a few of them cared about the conservation of the village. Because if the conservation planning is made, they think they can't get compensation of demolition.

4.5 Tourist

To some degree, tourism has contributed to economic recovery. But the tourists are considered as external factors. In this case, the natives didn't get the benefit of tourism. On the contrary, it disturbed the daily life of the natives for the lack of planning.

4.6 Protection group

In this case, the protection group played a limited role in the conservation planning. It is made up of aged natives and retired officials, who used to work in superior planning bureau. They just can give some advice about the conservation.

5 Planning methods suggested

5.1 Subarea development

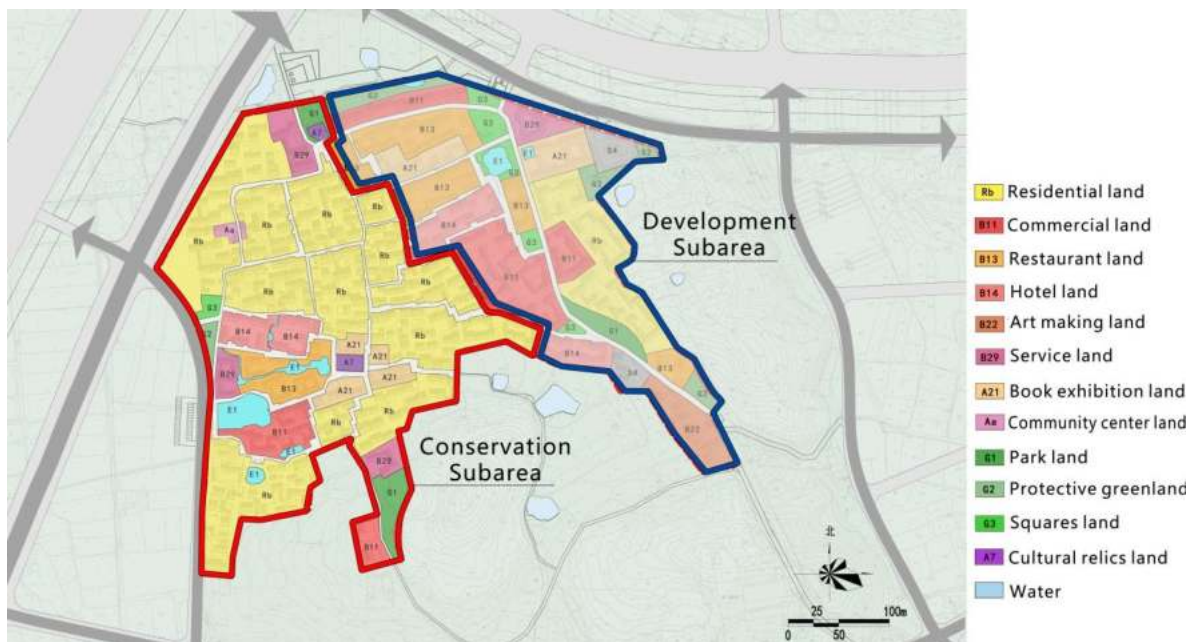


Figure 6 Land Use Planning and Zone Control

First, put economic development land-use outside the core protection area, such as tourism land-use,

commercial services land-use and so on (Figure 6). On one hand, keep the core protection area extend the tradition life-style. On the other hand, through land consolidation, develop suitable economy outside the core protection area to improve the quality of life. Second, strengthen the regulation and monitoring of the develop subarea. The conservation regulations of historic villages have fully developed. But the regulations of the develop part is still under study. And the new developing functions are external factors, which might be inconsistent with the conservation.

5.2 Set up the environment protection area

Set up the environment protection area, to avoid the stress of sprawling of urban area. According to the investigation, Dou village is surrounded by farmland and hills in history, which is still kept the same nowadays. Setting up the environment protection area helps to protect this historic environment element and avoid excessive development of the urban area. And the surrounding farmland is part of the traditional life of the natives. It is also helps to protect the culture heritage.

5.3 Unit and small-scale renewal

Frist, in conservation subarea, use small-scale dynamic renewal (Figure 7). The texture of the space is formed through years. Small-scale dynamic renewal can help to keep the traditional texture in the process. For the high density area, systemize and restore the traditional courtyard space. And give new function to the discarded historic buildings. Second, develop suitable and small-scale commercial activities in the develop subarea. Through house renovation, develop commercial activities step by step. On one hand, this can maintain the naturally formed texture. On the other hand, this helps to reduce development costs.



Figure 7 Units and Small-scale Renewal in Conservation Subarea

6 Conclusion

During the research, the most prominent problem is imbalances of the power of the participators. Under the circumstances, the effect of three planning methods is limited. To solve this problem, government should pay more attention on the carrying out of the planning, and give more rights to the local groups. At the same time, government should encourage social organizations to raise funds for the conservation. On one hand, this can ensure the implementation of the conservation program, especially when the local government lack of funds. On the other hand, this might help the local economy develop sustainably. And superior planning bureau should participate all through the program to keep the right direction, and avoid selling the historic village to profit-making institutions.

The conservation program will not end with the accomplishment of the conservation planning. So it is necessary to carry out dynamic planning. Planners should keep on taking part in the conservation program after planning finished. This can assure the successful conservation technically. To some extent, planners connect the vulnerable groups and the power sectors. It is necessary for planners to carry out dynamic planning.

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