



## PROJECT TITLE

The Way to Cultural Revival of the Ancient City Streets:  
Environmental Improvement of the Streets in Zhengding Ancient City

## Project Statement

Since 2022, Shijiazhuang City in Hebei Province has launched a city-wide urban renewal initiative focused on improving small streets and alleys. This project is a critical component of this initiative, aimed at creating exemplary streets. Zhengding County, located in Shijiazhuang, is a National Historic City with rich historical and cultural resources. The project is located in the core area of the ancient city of Zhengding, which involves ten streets.

With the continuous expansion of the city and the development of tourism and commerce in the ancient town, buildings and vehicles have increasingly encroached upon street spaces, leading to the loss of cultural features and weakening cultural influence. Additionally, there is a lack of activity spaces for people to stay. The design addresses various contradictions in the renewal of the Historical City from three perspectives: cultural features, cultural information, and cultural venues, profoundly exploring the cultural characteristics of each street to showcase their unique cultural connotations.

The design aims to organically integrate Zhengding's historical culture into the streets of the ancient city, seeking a way to cultural revival and making the project a model of practical significance in the renewal of the ancient city.



# PROJECT NARRATIVE AND CONTENTS

## 1. Project Background

The ancient city of Zhengding boasts a history spanning over 1,600 years, encompassing nine uninterrupted dynasties and embodying the essence of a millennium-old State Capital. It retains a complete ancient city layout, characterized by its grand scale and well-preserved Capital Structures. The city features a distinctive street and alley pattern with a "Double Cross" framework that has persisted since the Tang Dynasty.

Zhengding boasts numerous Historical and Cultural Relics, serving as a living fossil of ancient Chinese urban development. Important Historical and Cultural Heritage within the ancient city include 11 Officially Protected Monuments and Sites at various levels, 6 Immovable Cultural Heritage not yet officially recognized, 38 Historical Buildings, 80 Intangible Cultural Heritage at various levels, and 39 Ancient And Famous Woody Plants. The ten streets are within the Historic Conservation Area and Townscape Protection Area, with 7 of them being Townscape Streets. The ten streets are adjacent to multiple Historical and Cultural Heritage Sites and involve the protection of several Cultural Sightlines.

## 2. Design Scope

The design research scope covers the ancient city of Zhengding, with an area of approximately 8.7 square kilometers. The key-designed alleys include Yucai Street (1400m), Yuhua Street (346m), Fuqian Street (410m), Xingrong Street (339m), Xiangrong Street (171m), Dongyuan Street (640m), Yanghe East Street (168m), Kaiyuan Street (311m), Meishan East Street (690m), and Changxing Street (640m), totalling 5115 meters in length.

## 3. Current Issues

The design identifies and organizes current issues from three aspects: traffic order, historical culture, and human needs.

### - 3.1. Traffic Order Imbalance

Investigations reveal that the local government has built multiple free parking lots to accommodate the parking needs of residents and tourists in the ancient city. The parking spaces were designed without taking the historical cultural heritage along the streets into account. As a result, the relics are being obscured and neglected, which disrupts the order of the ancient city alleys. Additionally, irregular vehicle parking poses safety hazards for pedestrians.

### - 3.2. Decline of Historical Value

With the ancient city's commercialization, the streets' cultural features have gradually become homogenized, diminishing their unique characteristics. Crucial cultural heritage lacks proper display routes, rendering the cultural features of the streets less distinct. This failure to showcase the cultural essence of the streets hinders the transmission and development of Zhengding's historical context.

### - 3.3. Lack of Cultural Venues

Field research indicates that the primary users of the designed streets are local residents and tourists. There is a notable lack of activity spaces for people to rest and stay in the ancient city, and the environmental elements with cultural attributes are missing. This absence prevents residents from socializing and relaxing in public spaces and leaves tourists without areas to pause and experience the cultural atmosphere.

## 4. Design Strategies

Based on preliminary research and analysis, and addressing the three main existing issues, the following three design strategies were developed:

### - 4.1. Highlight Cultural Features

#### - Control the vehicle entry and Improve Historical Features

For vehicle-pedestrian mixed traffic, sidewalks were expanded to meet usage demands. For example, the sidewalks on both sides of Yanghe East Street vary in width. The design swaps the width of the wider side with the narrower side to accommodate pedestrians on both sides. It also relieves the walking space occupied by vehicles used for parking. For streets designated for exclusive pedestrian use, street access was restricted to pedestrians following consultations with multiple stakeholders. This adjustment was successfully implemented on Xiangrong Street, resulting in a notable revitalization of businesses and enhanced safety, rendering the street an attractive destination for visitors.

According to the Historic Townscape Area's control requirements, the height, volume, color, and form of buildings along the alleys were strictly controlled, and traditional paving of the streets needs to be restored.

#### - Release Usable Space Near Cultural Heritage Sites

Adjacent to Officially Protected Monuments and Sites, like the Chenghuang Temple on Yucai Street, the Linji Temple wall on Yanghe East Street, and Kaiyuan Street overlooking Kaiyuan Temple, parking areas were transformed into public activity spaces, enhancing cultural significance and cityscape appeal. This adjustment reinforces the



# PROJECT NARRATIVE AND CONTENTS

cultural environment, accentuating its importance in the urban landscape and enriching the experience for residents and tourists.

## - 4.2. Enhance Cultural Information Identification

### - Strengthen Cultural Axes and Sightlines

The design emphasizes preserving and enhancing cultural axes and landscape sightlines to revitalize Historical and Cultural Heritage. The Fuqian Street design efforts focus on safeguarding the "Fuqian Street-Sumeru Pagoda" sightline and maintaining the traditional Zhengding State Office layout. Restoration efforts ensure architectural integrity while eliminating unauthorized structures. Fuqian Street is divided into four historical nodes, featuring a restored Memorial Arch inscribed with "Ancient Changshan County," a ground sculpture depicting Zhengding's county site evolution, specially designed paving symbolizing the historical development axis, and an intricate mural portraying the ancient cityscape. This approach preserves sightline integrity and establishes a cohesive cultural axis for exploration.

### - Establish Cultural Display Viewports

In street areas bordering Officially Protected Monuments and Sites, designated visitor spaces facilitate closer observation of artifacts and deeper cultural immersion. The Yuan Opera cultural node, located at the west end of Yanghe East Street in the Yanghe Tower Townscape area, showcases the grandeur of the building and its historical ties to Yuan Opera culture through informative display walls, enhancing visitors' appreciation of its historical significance.

## - 4.3. Promote Cultural Venue Participation

### - Creating Interactive Cultural Experiences for Residents

More activity spaces were released by reorganizing street interfaces, which could be pocket parks or micro-spaces transformed from existing conditions. Landscape design integrated and placed historical cultural elements into these spaces, linking culture with residents' lives. Upon completion, Dongyuan Street has added more resting areas, encouraging more people to linger and creating a vibrant cultural atmosphere.

### - Integrating Culture into Landscape Details

Streets play crucial roles in transmitting cultural heritage. The design seamlessly incorporates cultural elements into landscape details by meticulously examining cultural contexts and selecting diverse materials. This tailoring of environmental features with cultural attributes creates versatile activity spaces. Yucai Street features the Zhengding Confucian Temple and Chenghuang Temple, representing Taoist and Confucian cultures.

Cultural elements are embodied in landscape facilities like paving, walls, benches, and flowerpots, expressing the essence of culture through landscaping.

## 5. Implementation Effect Control

During the design process, we emphasized multidisciplinary collaboration and established a platform for cooperation across departments with the client to ensure efficient work mechanisms. The project focused on three aspects of effect control: overall management, public participation, and on-site verification.

### - Comprehensive Management

The project involved coordinating multiple disciplines, including heritage conservation, landscape design, architectural design, urban planning, traffic design, and lighting design. It regularly organized expert seminars to ensure the plan's reasonable advancement.

### - Public Participation

Interviews and consultations with residents were conducted to ensure the plan effectively addresses their problems and protects public interests.

### - On-site Verification

Designers provided on-site guidance to the construction team, comparing materials and requiring sample sections to be laid out before full implementation. Full-scale work proceeded only after meeting the standards.

## 6. Social Impact


The environmental improvement of ancient city streets is a micro-urban initiative with significant implications for urban development. Recognizing the site's cultural significance is crucial for facilitating the revival of these historic streets. Post-implementation, the augmentation of public spaces and greenery has elevated resident amenities and strengthened Zhengding's cultural heritage preservation efforts.

This project has earned praise from locals, with Dongyuan Street and Xiangrong Street being named "Most Beautiful Streets and Alleys in Shijiazhuang." Similarly, Xingrong Street and Dongyuan Street have been recognized as "Exquisite Street Zones in Hebei Province." At the same time, Fuqian Street stands as a provincial exemplar of "purification, vegetation, illumination, beautification," earning the prestigious designation of a model demonstration street.





# MASTER PLAN



 **8.7km<sup>2</sup>**  
Scope of study area

 **5115m**  
Design length

 **62,100**  
The permanent resident population

 **6**  
National historical heritage

Zhengding, praised by Liang Sicheng as a "living fossil of ancient Chinese urban development," boasts numerous Historical and Cultural Heritage Sites.

In 2023, its distinctive ancient city experience tour attracted over 15 million visitors. The project involves six National-Level Historical and Cultural Heritage Sites and several Historical Buildings along the streets. It comprehensively plans the ten key streets, extending the research scope to the entire Zhengding Ancient City, and integrates the historical and cultural resources.

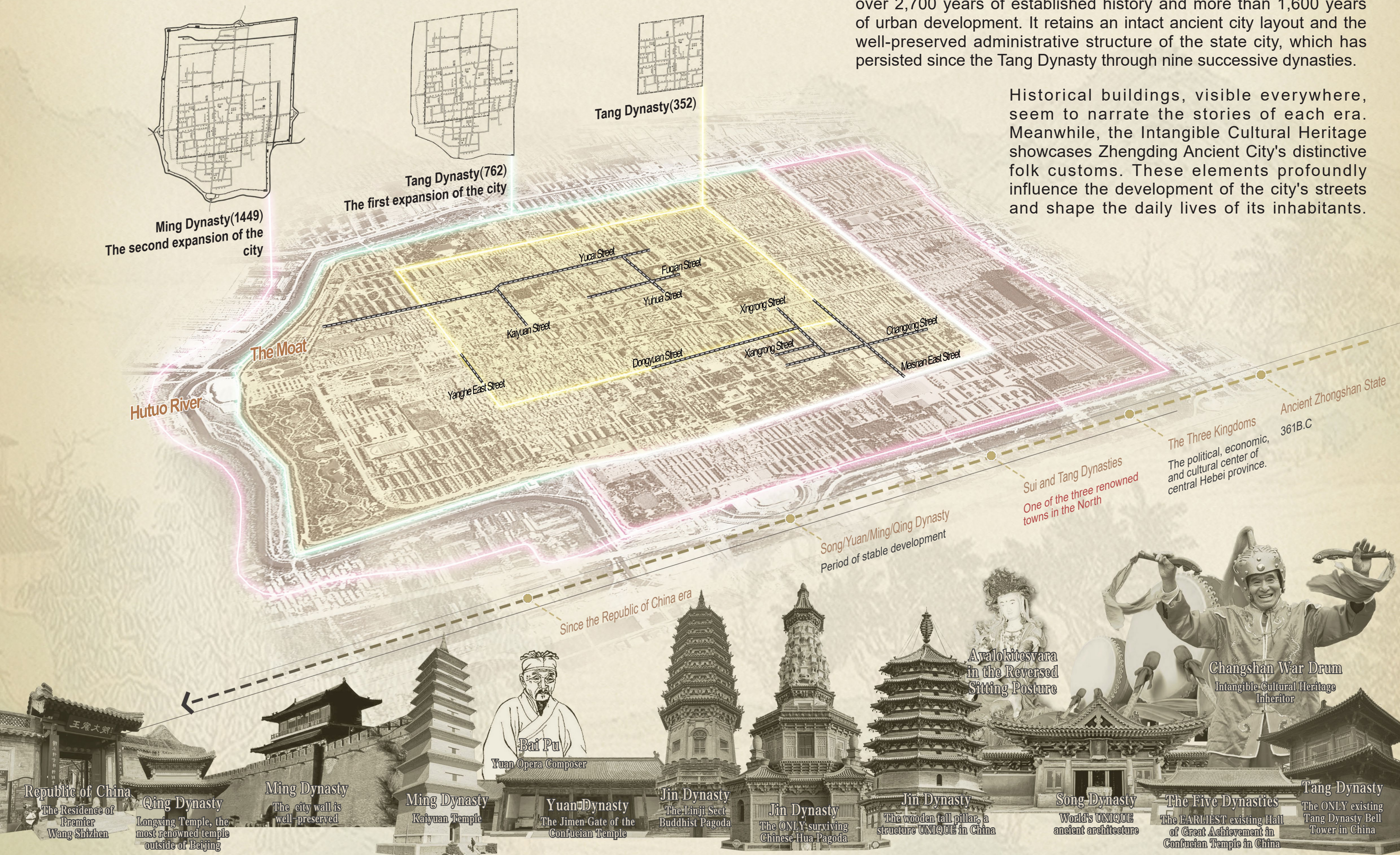




# HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE SITE

Zhengding Ancient City is a National Historic City in China, boasting over 2,700 years of established history and more than 1,600 years of urban development. It retains an intact ancient city layout and the well-preserved administrative structure of the state city, which has persisted since the Tang Dynasty through nine successive dynasties.

Historical buildings, visible everywhere, seem to narrate the stories of each era. Meanwhile, the Intangible Cultural Heritage showcases Zhengding Ancient City's distinctive folk customs. These elements profoundly influence the development of the city's streets and shape the daily lives of its inhabitants.





# SITE ANALYSIS

## Traffic Order Imbalance

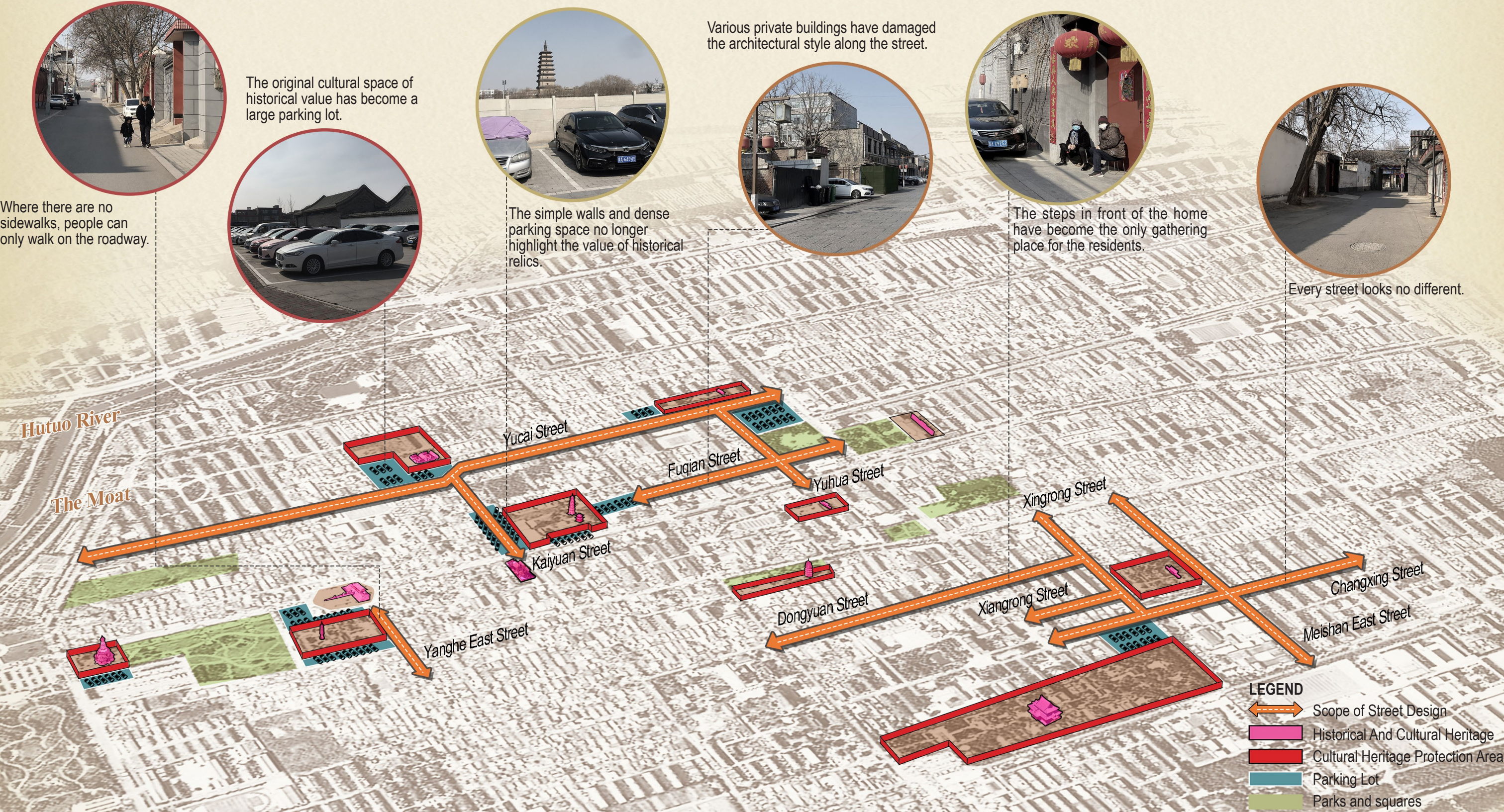
- The parking space distribution is unreasonable and encroaches upon the protected areas of Historical And Cultural Heritage.
- The discontinuous sidewalks hinder the walking experience.

## Decline of Historical

- The similar style of streets fails to reflect the value of historical artifacts.
- The encroachment and unauthorized constructions in street undermine the historical integrity and aesthetic value of the streetcapes.

## Lack of Cultural Venues

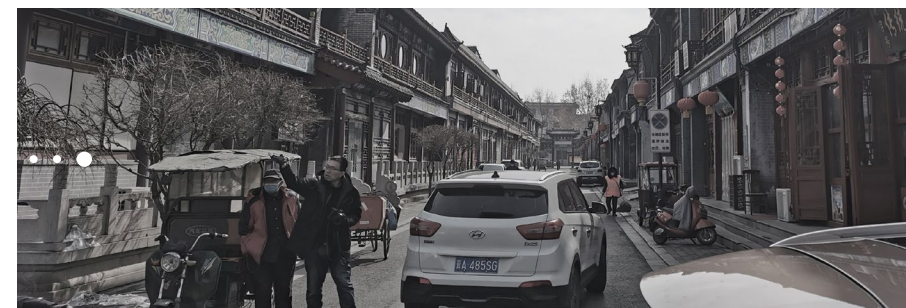
- The streets have a single-function use, resulting in a monotonous and uninspiring visitor experience.
- Lack of cultural and human interaction, with no opportunities for engaging in cultural experience activities.





# HIGHLIGHT CULTURAL FEATURES

Control the vehicle entry and Improve Historical Features

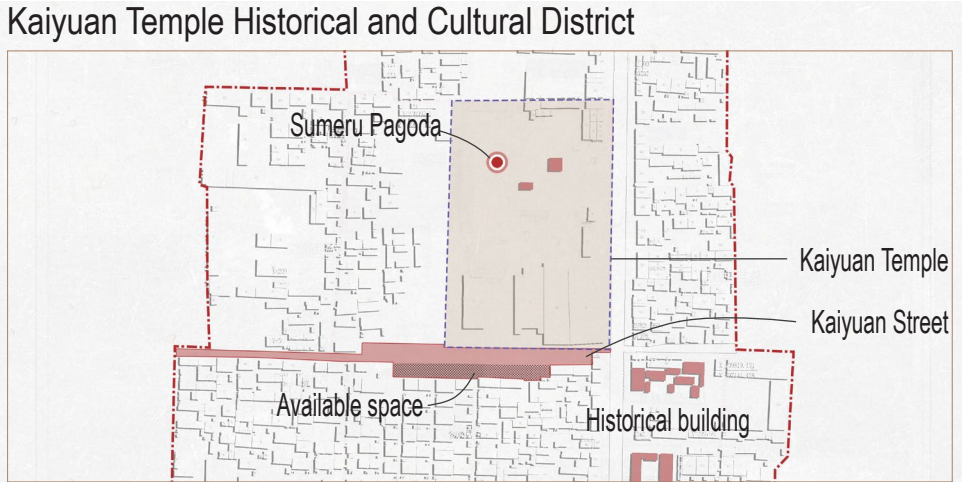
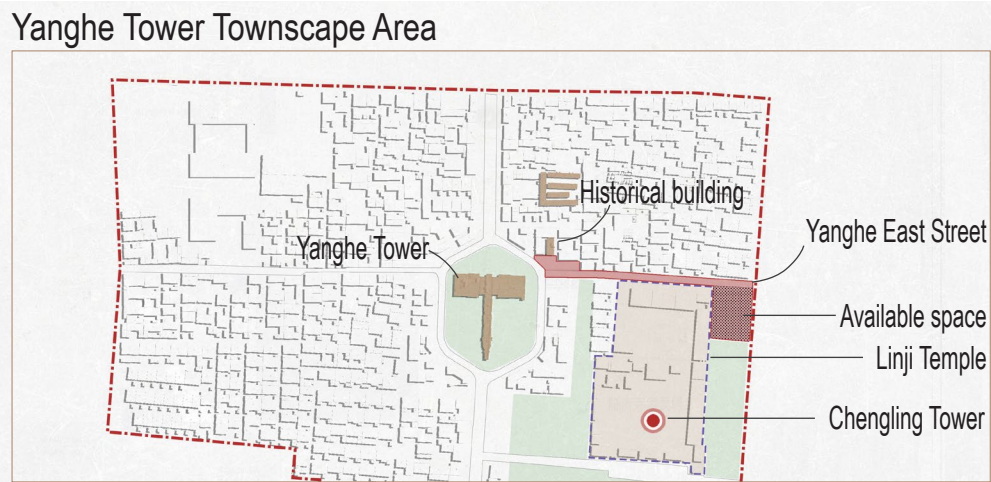
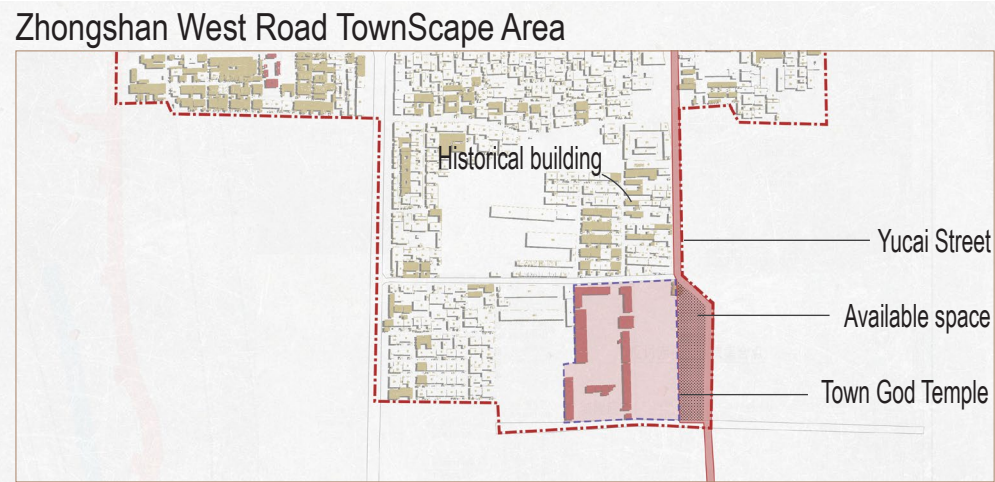


Assessing the dual-use nature of streets for both pedestrians and vehicles, we evaluated their cultural significance and traffic requirements. We implemented measures to either widen sidewalks appropriately or designate full pedestrian rights-of-way, ensuring pedestrian priority. Complying with preservation guidelines for historical aesthetics, we updated street paving better to integrate residents and visitors into the historical streetscape.



# HIGHLIGHT CULTURAL FEATURES

## Release Available Space Near Cultural Heritage Sites

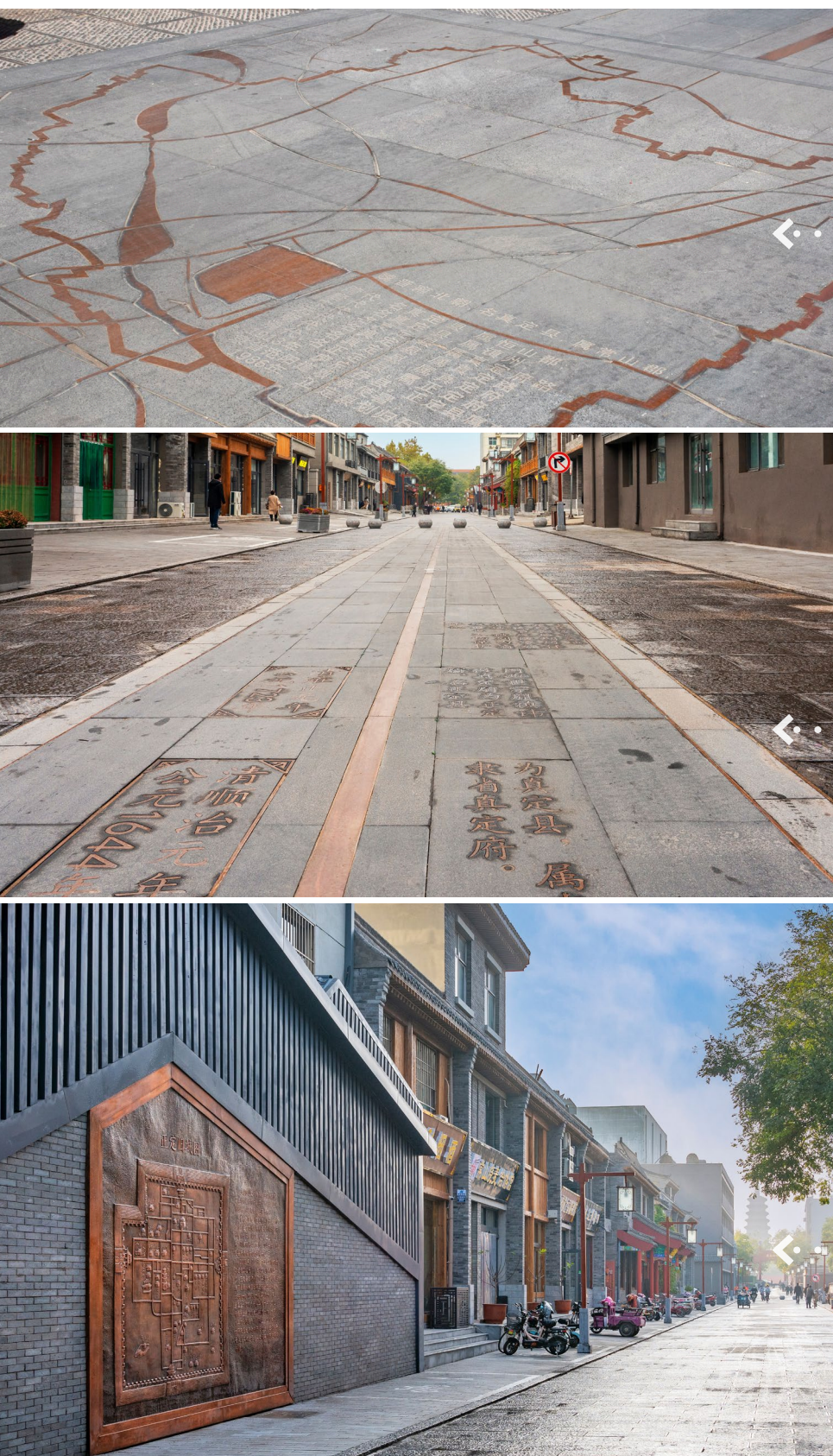


For the street areas adjacent to Officially Protected Monuments and Sites, clearing some parking spaces and repurposing them as public activity spaces can better shape the surrounding environment of cultural heritage. This highlights its significance in shaping the urban cultural landscape and expanding its influence on residents and tourists.



# ENHANCE CULTURAL INFORMATION IDENTIFICATION

## Strengthen Cultural Axes and Sightlines

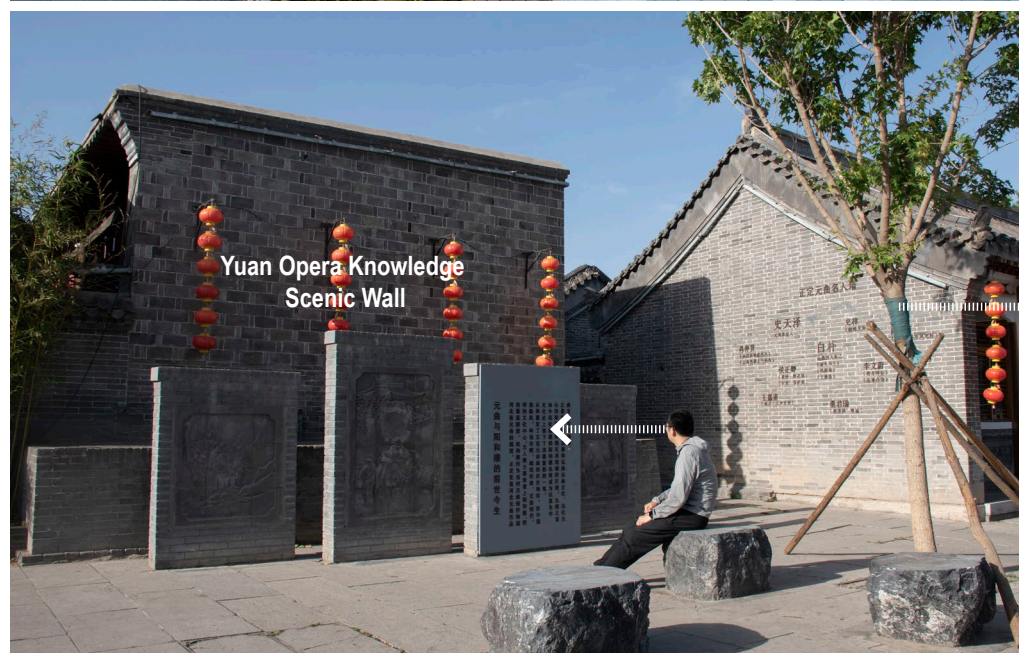


The Zhengding state office was constructed in 1262 during the Yuan Dynasty. Fuqian Street, which was once the busiest street in front of the state office, continues to follow the same layout to this day. The design focuses on maintaining and enhancing the historical axis by preserving and renovating the architectural features and ground paving on both sides of the street. Additionally, it aims to strengthen the cultural view corridor with the Sumeru Pagoda of the Kaiyuan Temple in order to help more people appreciate the historical significance of the street.



# ENHANCE CULTURAL INFORMATION IDENTIFICATION

## Establish Cultural Display Viewports

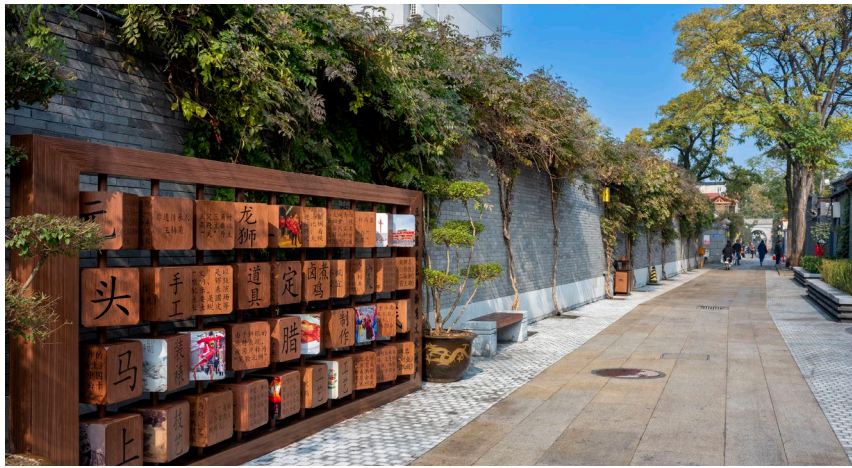


For historical buildings, create viewing and resting areas for people. For Intangible Cultural Heritage, install cultural display features such as story walls.



# PROMOTE CULTURAL VENUE PARTICIPATION

Creating Interactive Cultural Experiences for Residents

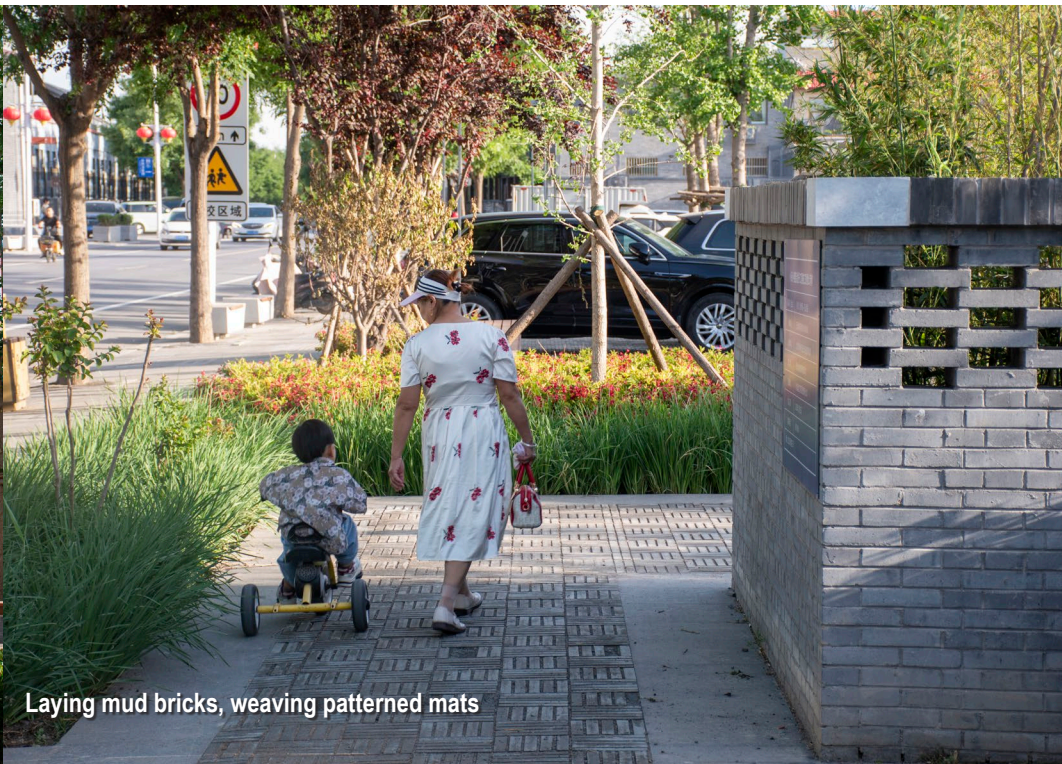
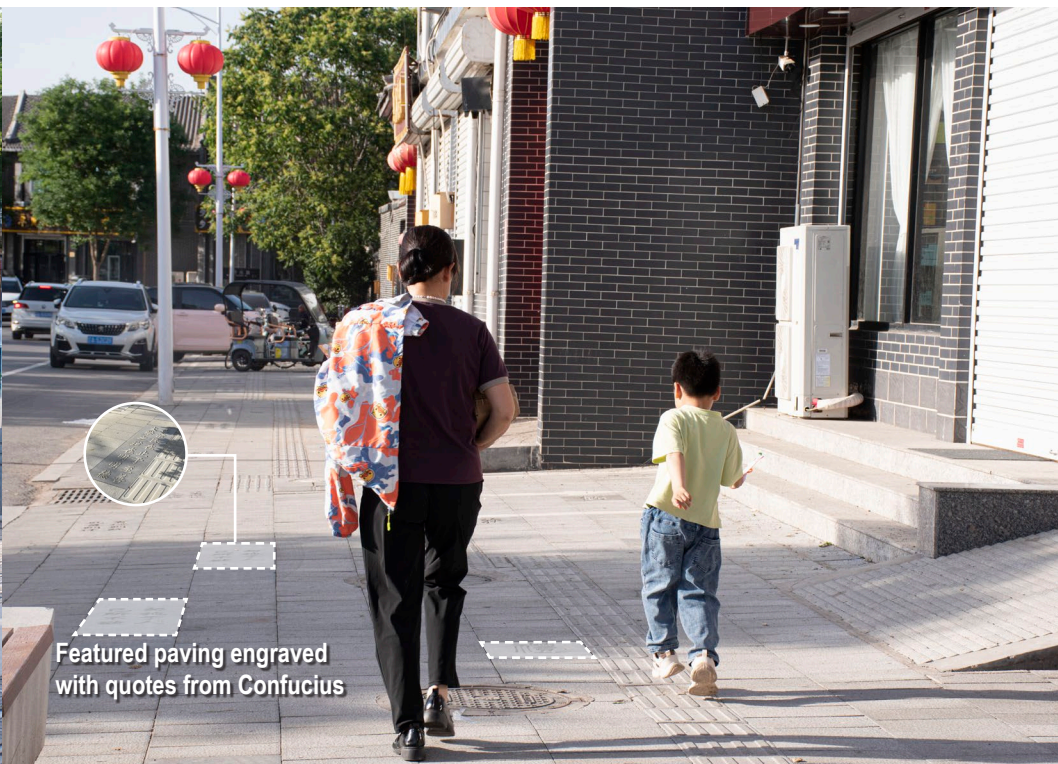


Dongyuan Street is mainly a residential area. The ongoing facade renovations maintain the architectural features found in Zhengding residences. Accessible ramps were upgraded to ensure seamless transitions between home entrances and the streets. The landscape design is based on the intangible cultural heritage of Zhengding folk, featuring turning brick carving walls and paper-cut walls for interactive participation. The shaded areas of the existing Ancient and Famous Woody Plants and the building plinths on both sides of the street were used to install seating benches. Additionally, old items like flower planters in the shape of a manger and water wells were placed to recreate historical living scenes.



# PROMOTE CULTURAL VENUE PARTICIPATION

## Integrating Culture into Landscape Details



The design, through meticulous analysis of cultural context and careful selection of materials, customizes culturally rich environmental elements, aiming to enhance the utilization of cultural spaces by both residents and tourists.



# WORK PATH

## Organize Multi-Disciplinary Discussions



By establishing a communication mechanism that combines top-down and bottom-up approaches and a model of public participation with both the client and residents, the project ensures its implementation meets the needs of various user groups. The plan adopts a "one household, one solution" design strategy to effectively address residents' concerns.



The project, led by the landscape design team, coordinates between the client and various disciplines. Regular multidisciplinary meetings are held to address current instabilities and historical issues, ensuring a balance of interests among all parties.

## Resident Meetings and Plan Negotiations



## On-site Implementation Control



Designers are involved throughout the entire project to ensure effective implementation. They conduct on-site measurements of street spaces, meticulously controlling design details. They also perform on-site comparisons for materials' color, texture, laying way and installation methods.



## On-site Material Comparison



## On-site Sample Section Comparison



## On-site Construction Guidance



## On-site Construction Guidance




# SOCIAL IMPACT



Dongyuan Street and Xiangrong Street earning the titles of  
**"Most Beautiful Streets and Alleys in Shijiazhuang."**

Fuqian Street stands as a provincial exemplar of  
**"purification, vegetation, illumination, beautification."**



The renovation has spurred tourism development  
**Increasing tourist numbers by 50%**  
compared to before the transformation.



**Added 6** new pocket parks.  
**Increase** the green area **by 5300 square** meters.

Upon the project's completion, residents' living conditions improved, visitors' experiences became more engaging, and Zhengding's cultural heritage was better preserved. This achievement signifies the simultaneous revival of both the cultural heritage of Zhengding's ancient city and the quality of life for its inhabitants.