



# Respecting Heritage, Sustaining Innovation

Renovation and Revitalization of Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel Central Garden





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# Project Statement

The Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel, located in Sanxiang Town, Zhongshan City, Guangdong Province, is adjacent to the ancient village of Yongmo. It is situated amidst the cultural convergence of traditional Lingnan culture and Sino-Western fusion, making it a masterpiece of modern Lingnan landscape architecture and a significant architectural heritage that embodies the memories of China's reform and opening-up.

After forty years of service, comprehensive renovation and reconstruction took place from 2021 to 2023. Through the symbiosis of mountains and waters, sustainable restoration, and dialogue between the old and the new, the project team explored the contemporary construction of modern Lingnan landscape architecture. By employing delicate craftsmanship, they revitalized the modern architectural heritage of Lingnan through the organic renewal of the culture of Sanxiang District.

以水為中心  
以山為前景  
高房為屏障  
小舍為群星  
向山背田野

WATER AS CORE  
MOUNTAINS IN THE FORE  
TALL BUILDINGS AS GUARDS  
SMALL HOUSES AS STARS GALORE  
BETWEEN FIELDS AND MOUNTAINS

AREA: 18800m<sup>2</sup>  
COMPLETION DATE: 2023  
LOCATION: Zhongshan, Guangdong, China



Historical map of Zhongshan water system





# Project Narrative and Contents

## 01. Project Background: A milestone political and cultural heritage representing the spirit of "boldly embracing the new wave of reform and not turning back to old ideologies"

Since the Ming and Qing Dynasties, Guangdong has actively participated in global affairs and has led the way in economic trade and cultural exchange. At the beginning of the reform and opening-up in 1978, prominent patriots from Hong Kong and Macau, such as Sir Fok Ying-tung, cooperated with the first domestic Sino-foreign joint venture hotel in the hometown of the national hero, Mr. Sun Yat-sen, in Zhongshan City. In the winter of 1980, the Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel officially opened, becoming the first hotel in China to implement modern management and the first resort to open a golf course. It has been hailed as the "first flower of reform and opening-up" and has hosted hundreds of national leaders. In January 1984, Comrade Deng Xiaoping left an expression of his firm belief in reform and opening-up, "not turning back to old ideologies," during his stay at Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel, which affirmed the development of the Lingnan modern architectural landscape represented by the Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel project. However, after more than 40 years of service, the Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel faced problems such as improper renovation and ageing of structural equipment. In 2022, it underwent minor renovation and repair with environmental upgrades, ushering in its second heyday.

Formative Phase

1978

AD1978-1979

1979

1980

Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel opened

Mr. Fok made three trips to Zhongshan to locate the site

Fok Yingdong accompanied Xi Zhongxun to inspect the construction site of Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel

Fok Yingdong (second from right) discusses the design and construction plan on site

Service Phase

1980s

The modern management experience of Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel attracted people from all over the country to visit

1984

Deng Xiaoping stayed in the Hotel, leaving the voice of the era of "no turning back".

2022

Hollow finishing

Decoration aged

Moldy walls

Aged structure

Due to the limit of the design life, in urgent need of retrofitting and updating

Reborn Phase

2022-2023

Space upgrades

March, 2023 Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel reopened



# Project Narrative and Contents

## 02. Architectural Renewal: Inheriting and developing the architectural characteristics of Lingnan regional architecture mixed with modernism from a contemporary perspective

"Lingnan modern landscape architecture" originated in the early 20th century. It blended modernist trends with Lingnan regional characteristics by innovating through gardens and exploring new spatial and formal concepts. It gradually matured in the 1970s and 1980s to become a distinctive style of modern Lingnan landscape architecture.

The Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel, built in 1979-1980, was designed by the renowned Lingnan architects Mo Bozhi, She Junnan, and Lin Zhaozhang. It represented the highest level of aesthetic interest, artistic achievement, and construction technology at the time. It stands as a masterpiece of Lingnan modern landscape architecture, embodying the rare integration of global and local elements as well as the harmonious coexistence of architectural space and urban landscape.



### 1980 - Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel - a modern landscape garden work that inherits the past and the future

Principal Architect:  
pioneer architect who combines Lingnan characteristics with modern architecture

Mo Bozhi



She Junnan



Lin Zhaozhang



Design Manuscript:  
Meticulous attention to detail



Garden rhythm: Relaxed rhythm, reflecting the feelings of the landscape



Decoration details: Derived from traditional garden style, combined with modern and simplistic style

Door style



Window style



5



# Project Narrative and Contents

## 02. Architectural Renewal: Inheriting and developing the architectural characteristics of Lingnan regional architecture mixed with modernism from a contemporary perspective

**Continuing the sentiment of the landscape:** This design maintains the design concept of Zhongshan Hot Spring from 40 years ago, with a landscape layout of mountains, water, gardens, woods, and buildings that blends the beauty of traditional Lingnan garden scenery with the simplicity and elegance of modern architecture. Water is the centre, mountains are the foreground, tall buildings act as barriers, small buildings are like stars, and the back faces the mountains and the wild.

- Protect and repair part

Renovation part
- 6 Reserved guest rooms

7 Reserved corridor

8 Jvyan Hall

9 Changyan Hall

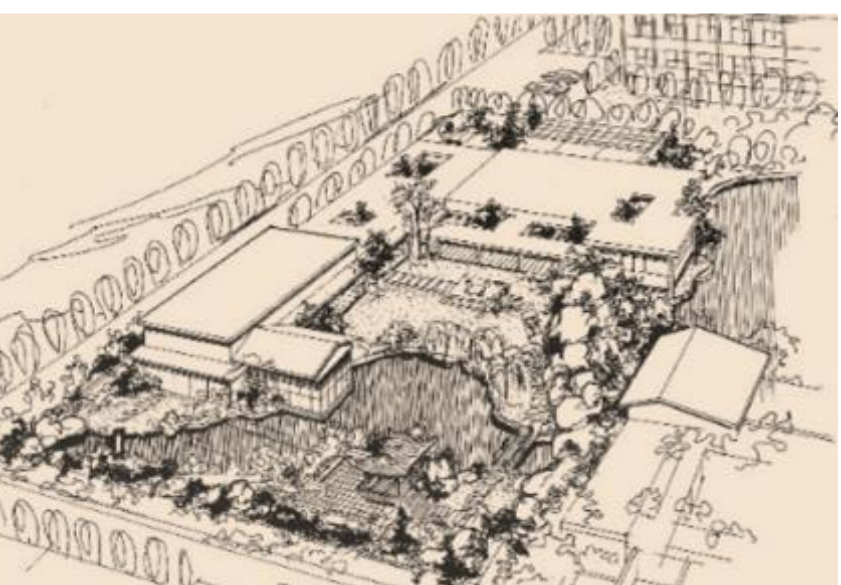
1 Porch

2 Lobby

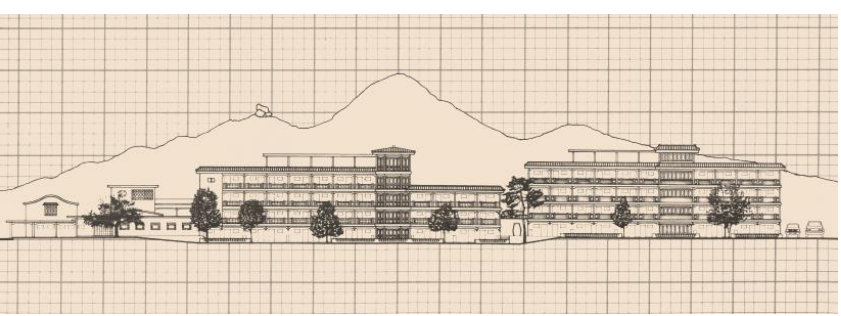
3 Restaurant

4 Guest rooms

5 Corridors



Typical design drawing of Zhongshan Hot Spring



Historical drawings of Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel



Plan of Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel

- International Conference Hall

Hot Spring Park

In December 1980, there were 6 conference rooms with a capacity of 1,000 people

1980, "China's Top 10 Hot Springs"



# Project Narrative and Contents

## 02. Architectural Renewal: Inheriting and developing the architectural characteristics of Lingnan regional architecture mixed with modernism from a contemporary perspective

**Dialogue between old and new:** The new architectural clusters preserve the overall architectural texture and spatial rhythm as conceived by the academician Mo Bozhi at the beginning of the design. It continues the overall layout, spatial organization, and plan of the garden-style pavilions, terraces, waterside pavilions, and corridors and maintains a harmonious and identifiable connection with the preserved buildings. Through water courtyards, curved corridors, and platforms, indoor and outdoor spaces are interconnected, enhancing the permeability of the landscape. The combination of corridors and landscapes as well as the shifting of scenes creates a rich spatial landscape hierarchy.

Corridor



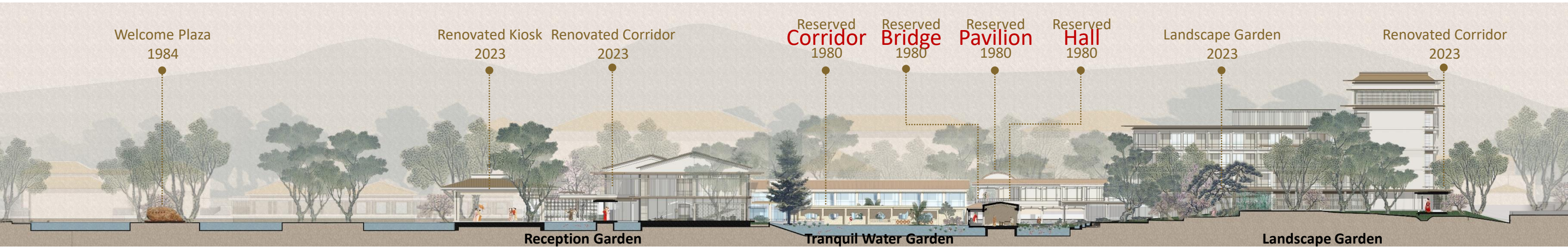
Bridge



Pavilion



Hall

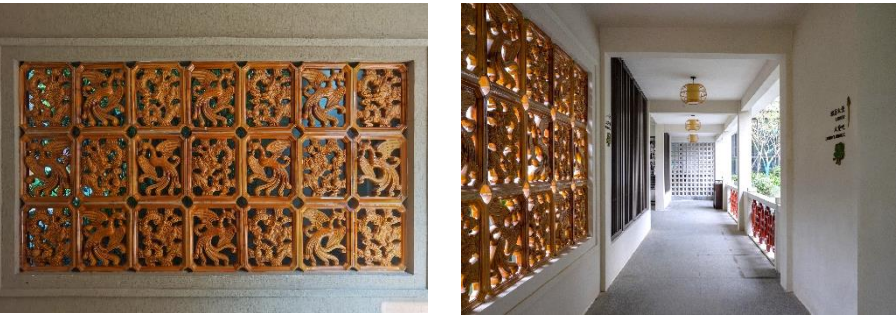




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## 02. Architectural Renewal: Inheriting and developing the architectural characteristics of Lingnan regional architecture mixed with modernism from a contemporary perspective

The new design retains the original architectural decorative elements of the garden, such as glazed tiles, louvered windows, flower arbors, and flower bricks. The renovated parts adhere to the essence of modern Lingnan architecture, maintaining the textural combination of the original buildings. The architectural components feature thin eaves, slender columns, and transparent and lightweight facades. The design team used a "freehand" approach, refining and simplifying with geometric lines and transforming them into traditional decorative details reinterpreted with contemporary building materials.



Reserved lattice windows



Reserved railings

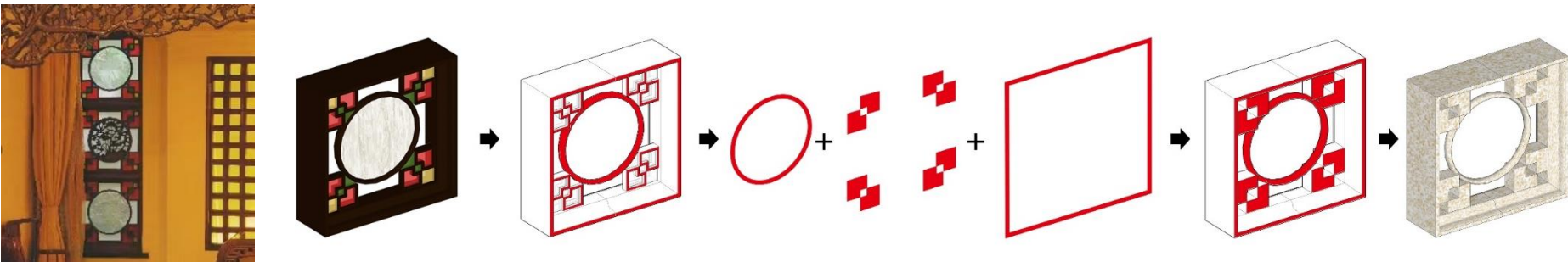


Reserved windows

Original style reservation



The effect of the space after the construction completed



1. Get inspiration from the lattice Windows of Shanzhuang Hotel
2. Elements extraction and simplification
3. Combination of elements
4. Marble and steel plate



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## 02. Architectural Renewal: Inheriting and developing the architectural characteristics of Lingnan regional architecture mixed with modernism from a contemporary perspective

**Creating an indoor atmosphere:** Local materials were predominantly used for interior design with the core idea of maintaining "Lingnan charm and atmosphere". The lobby and restaurant feature warm wood tones, creating a warm and delicate space. A suspended staircase in the hall pays homage to classic Lingnan –architecture and the Mineral Spring Hotel flying staircase. The guest rooms cleverly feature traditional Lingnan-style rattan sliding doors, which not only feel familiar but also enhance the diversity of usage scenarios. Elements such as grilles, glass, and grids are ingeniously used indoors to blur the boundary between indoor and outdoor spaces.

Before the renovation, people enjoyed meals in the supporting restaurant



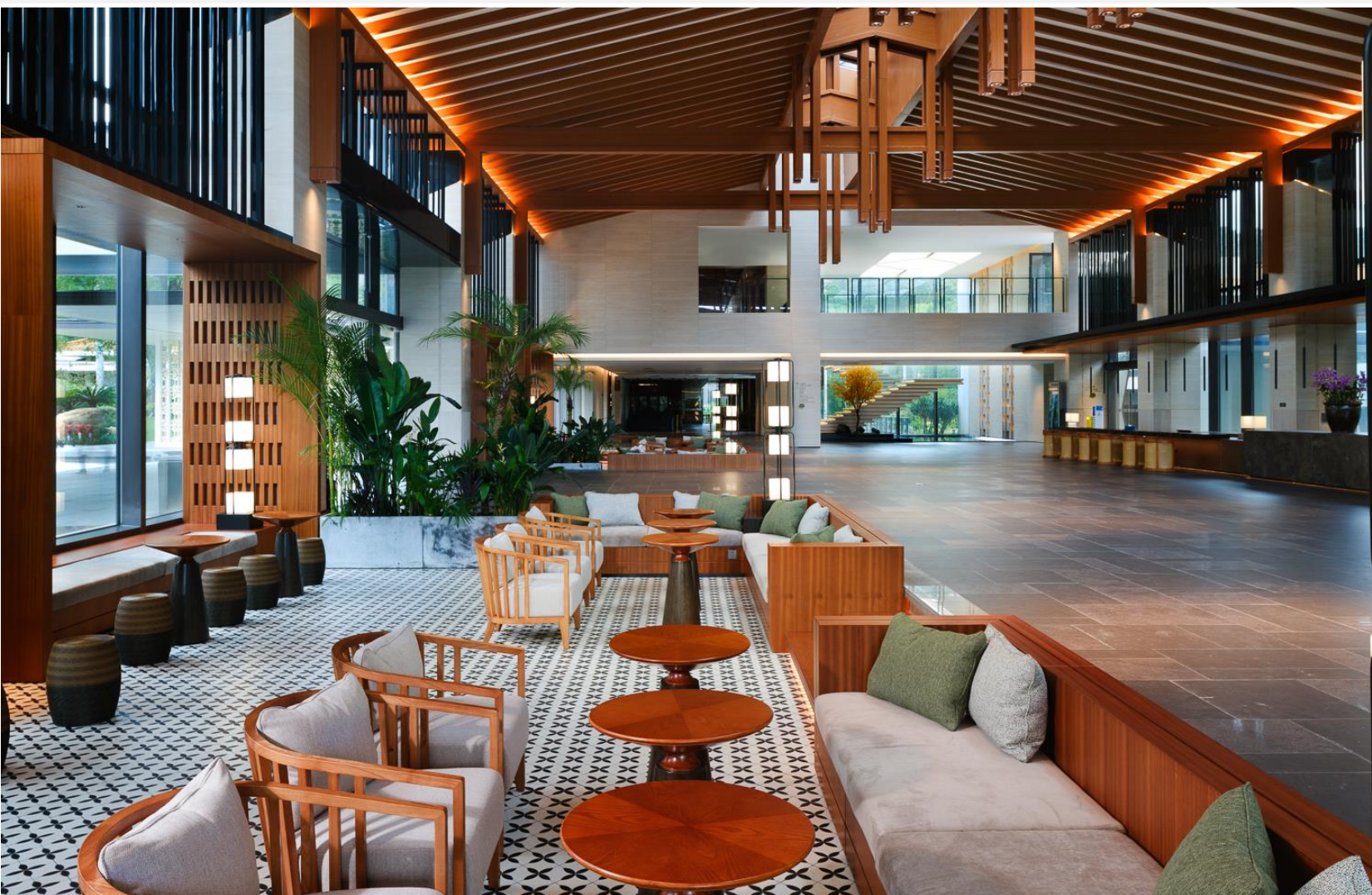
The Lingnan characteristic decoration of the hotel suite before renovation



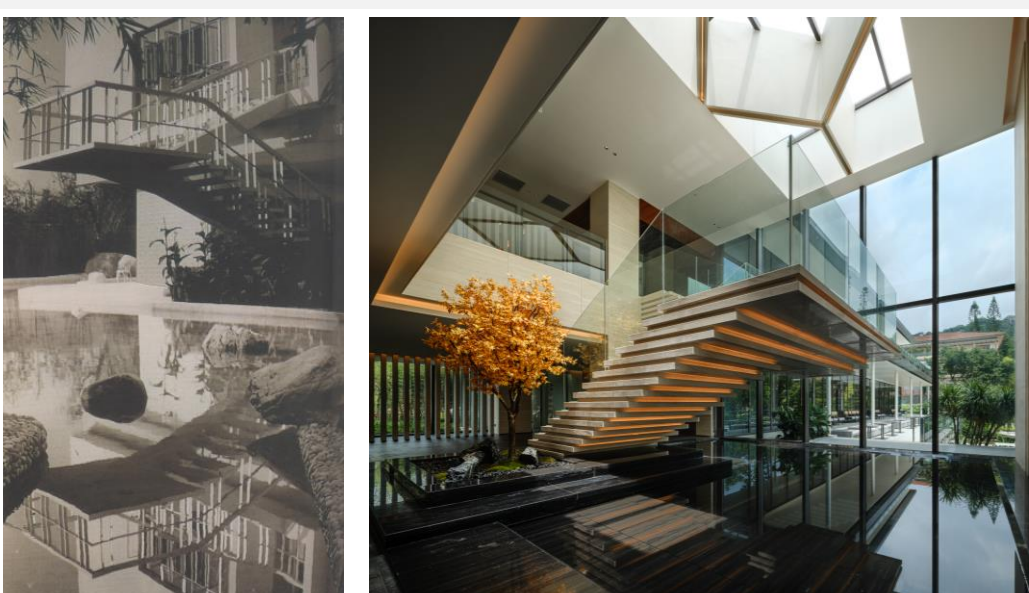
The Lingnan characteristic lobby and reception room before renovation



Lingnan style lobby after renovation



The lobby staircase after renovation - a tribute to the flying ladder of the Mineral Spring Hotel



The rattan weaving material with the traditional characteristics of Lingnan

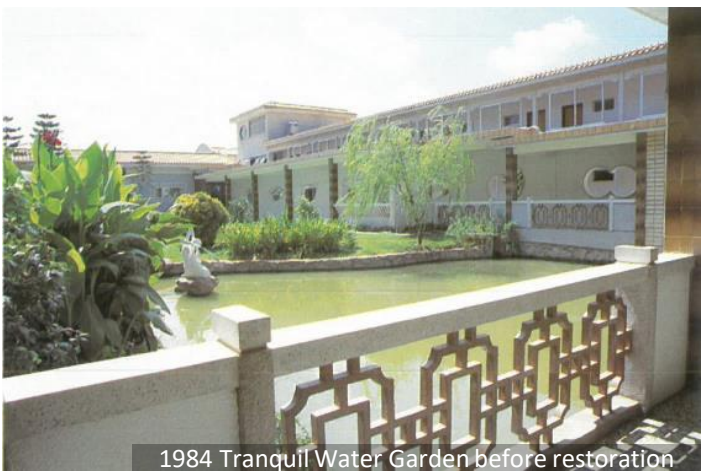
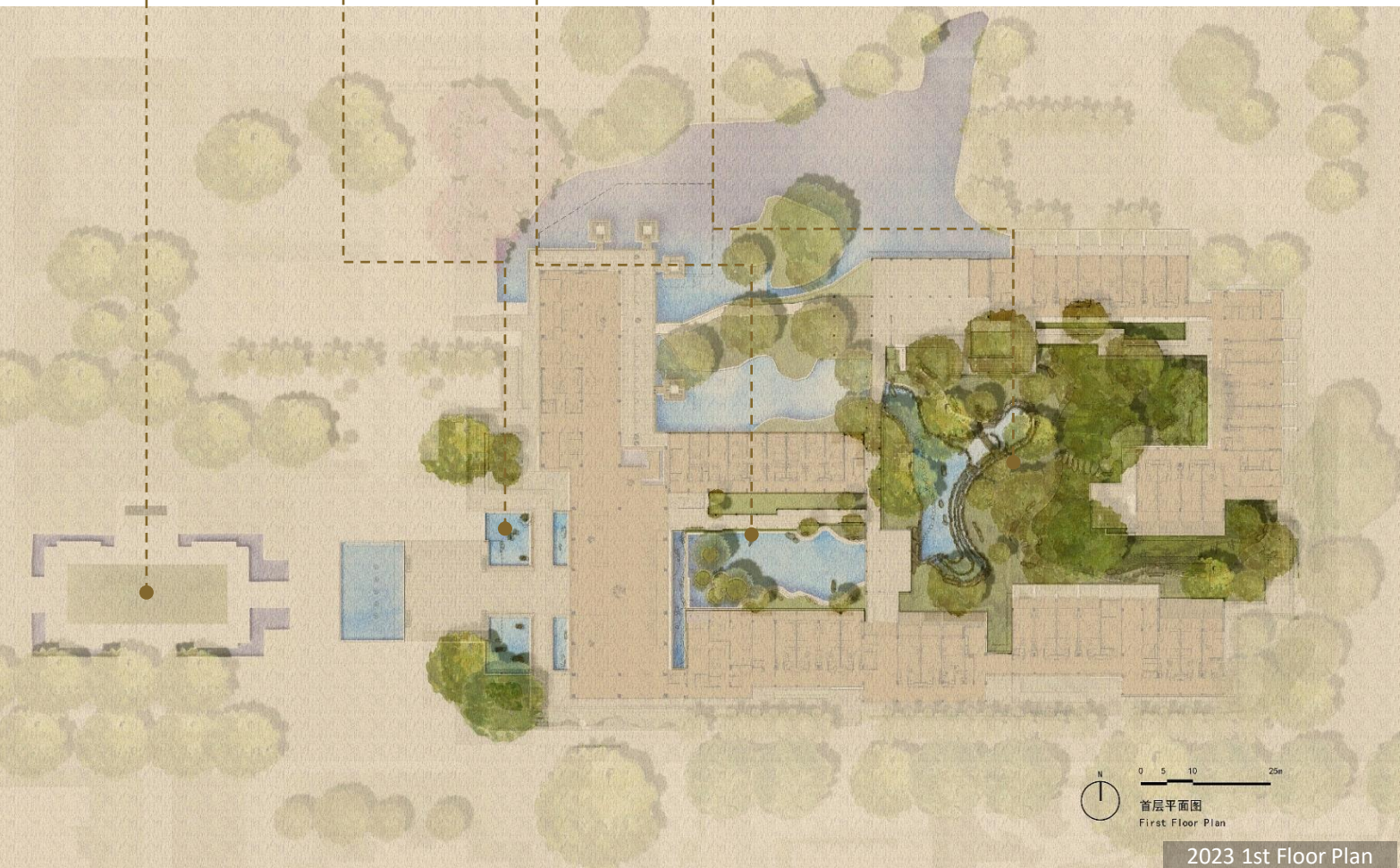
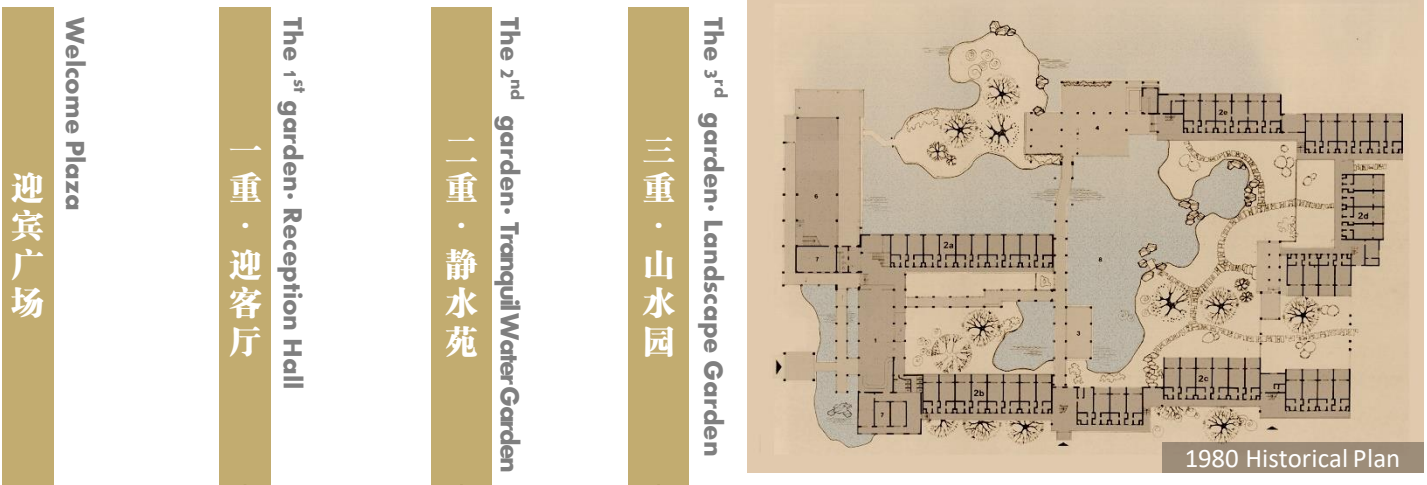




# Project Narrative and Contents

## 03. Garden Restoration: Reshaping historical gardens based on authenticity

**Recreating garden space:** The design team thoroughly studied early historical drawings to reshape the spatial sequence of the three-courtyard layout and restore the garden space. The first layer of garden space reinstates the welcoming water scene at the entrance using modern geometric still water surfaces adorned with local stones to create the initial impression of a mountain and water retreat. The second layer is the tranquil water garden after entering the lobby that preserves the South Asian pine trees. Ripples gently lap the water’s surface, offering a vast and profound space. Following the preserved gallery deep into the courtyard, one arrives at the climax of the garden –the landscape garden, where flowing water cascades over rocks, waterfalls gently flow, and bridges, peaks, courtyards, and distant mountain forest houses progress layer by layer, conveying a sense of remote tranquillity.





# Project Narrative and Contents

## 03. Garden Restoration: Reshaping historical gardens based on authenticity

**Organic integration of internal gardens and landscapes:** The design team used landscape gardening to fill the gaps in the architectural clusters, stitching together the central garden and the external grand landscape and continuing the initial sentiment of "gardens in the mountains" from 40 years ago. To ensure the unique charm and layers of rockery, traditional Lingnan rockery craftsmen were specially invited to create them. Each stone was carefully selected and arranged by the craftsmen, each with its own form and profound meaning.



1. Select the stone from the Lingnan area



2. Lingnan traditional stacked stone craftsmen 1:10 trial masonry



3. 2023.4.8 Construction of the bottom of the pool



4. 2023.4.14 Local stones Entry



5. 2023.4.10 Main local stones test



6. 2023.4.14 Local stones stacking



7. 2023.4.15 Fixing and demoulding



8. 2023.4.16 Water discharge test

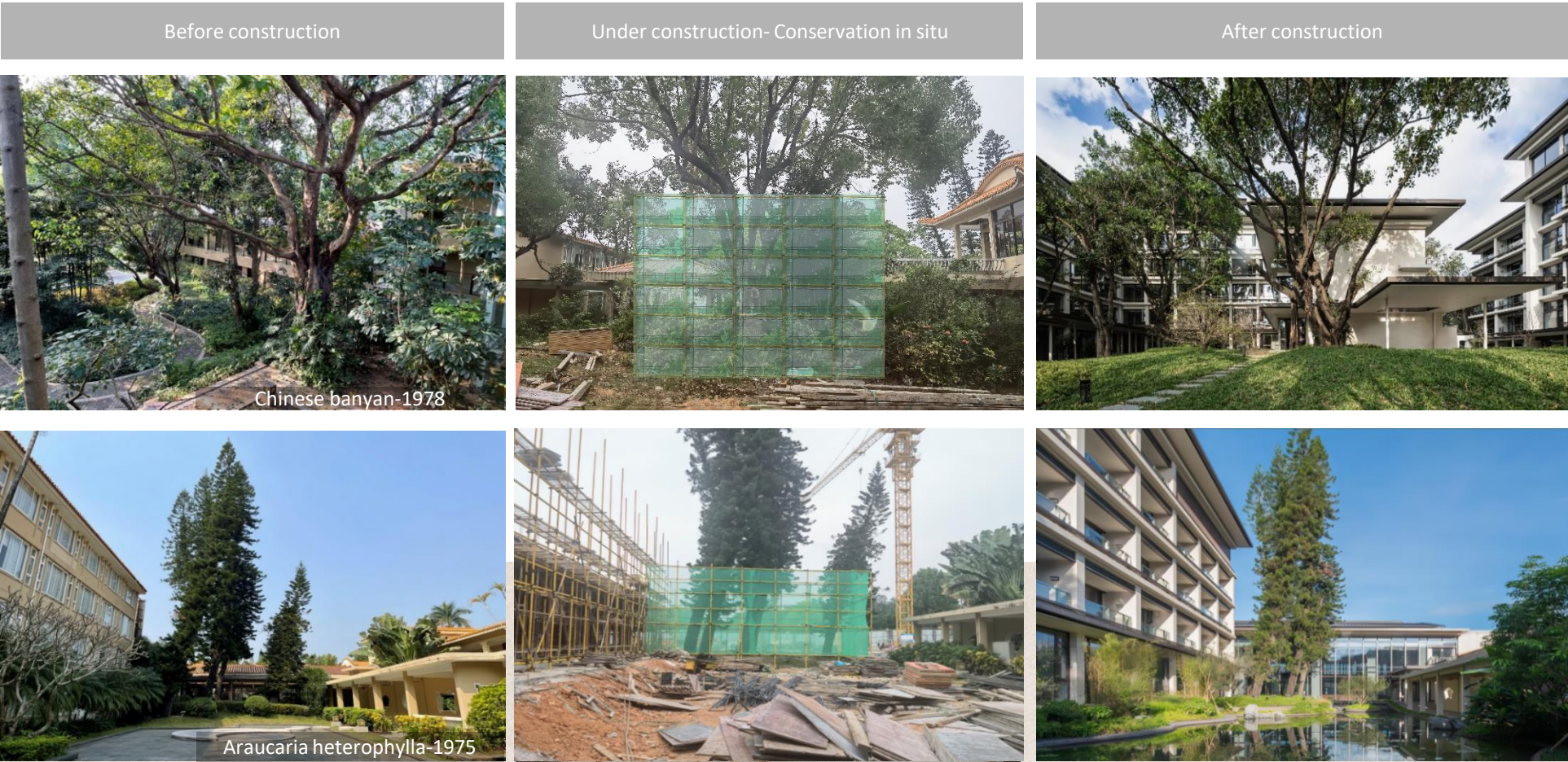




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Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel, an important historical landmark and significant urban asset that marks the beginning of Guangdong's reform and opening-up, has revitalized and driven the gradual renewal of the "Xiangshan Ancient" rural revitalization demonstration in Sanxiang Town and promotes the display of the area's historical context.

After renovation and reconstruction, the number of visitors to the Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel and its surrounding area increased by more than 70%. Significant increases in social media coverage resulted in significant revenue growth and cultural dissemination.

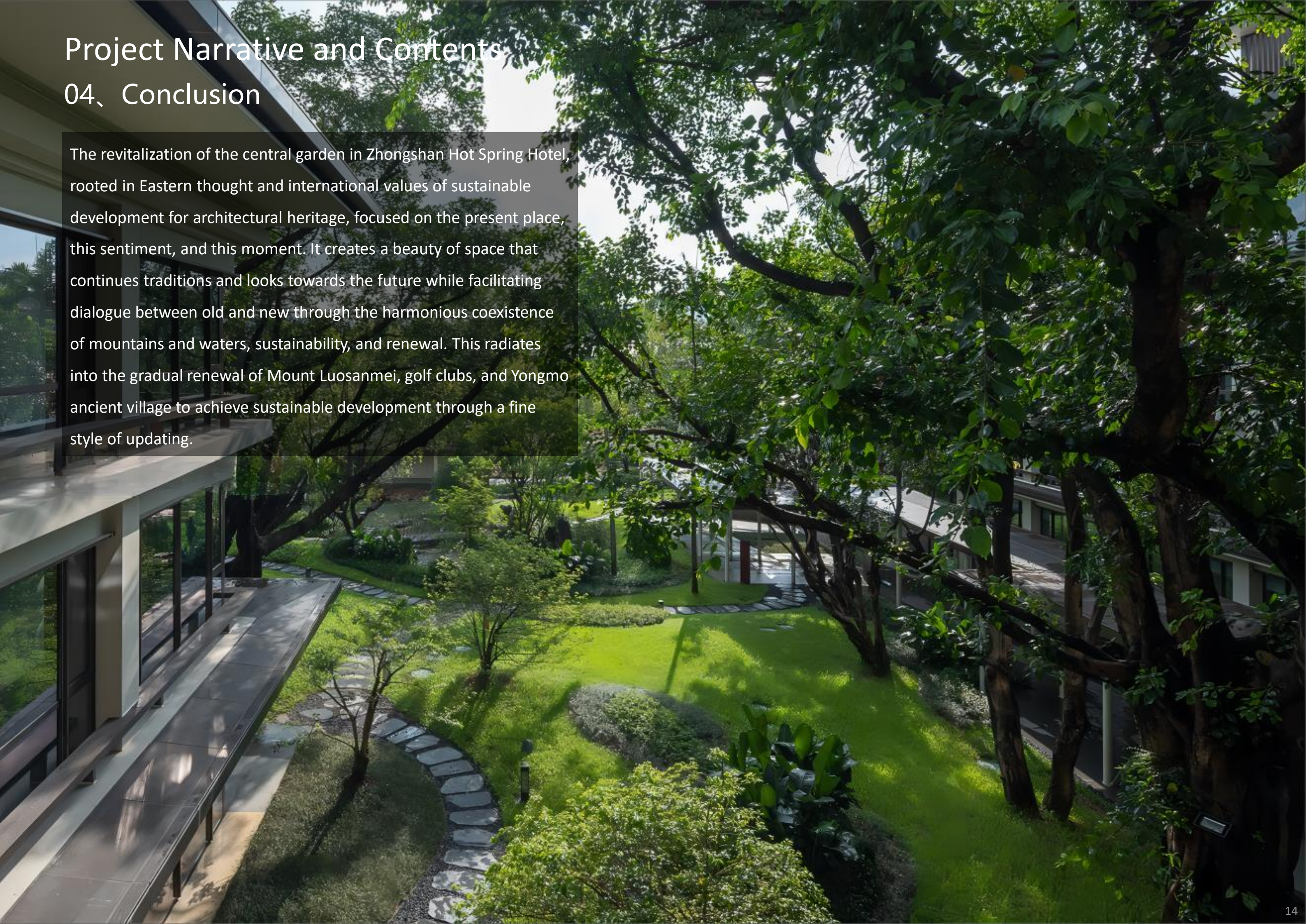




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## 04、 Conclusion

The revitalization of the central garden in Zhongshan Hot Spring Hotel, rooted in Eastern thought and international values of sustainable development for architectural heritage, focused on the present place, this sentiment, and this moment. It creates a beauty of space that continues traditions and looks towards the future while facilitating dialogue between old and new through the harmonious coexistence of mountains and waters, sustainability, and renewal. This radiates into the gradual renewal of Mount Luosanmei, golf clubs, and Yongmo ancient village to achieve sustainable development through a fine style of updating.







— Thank you for reading! —